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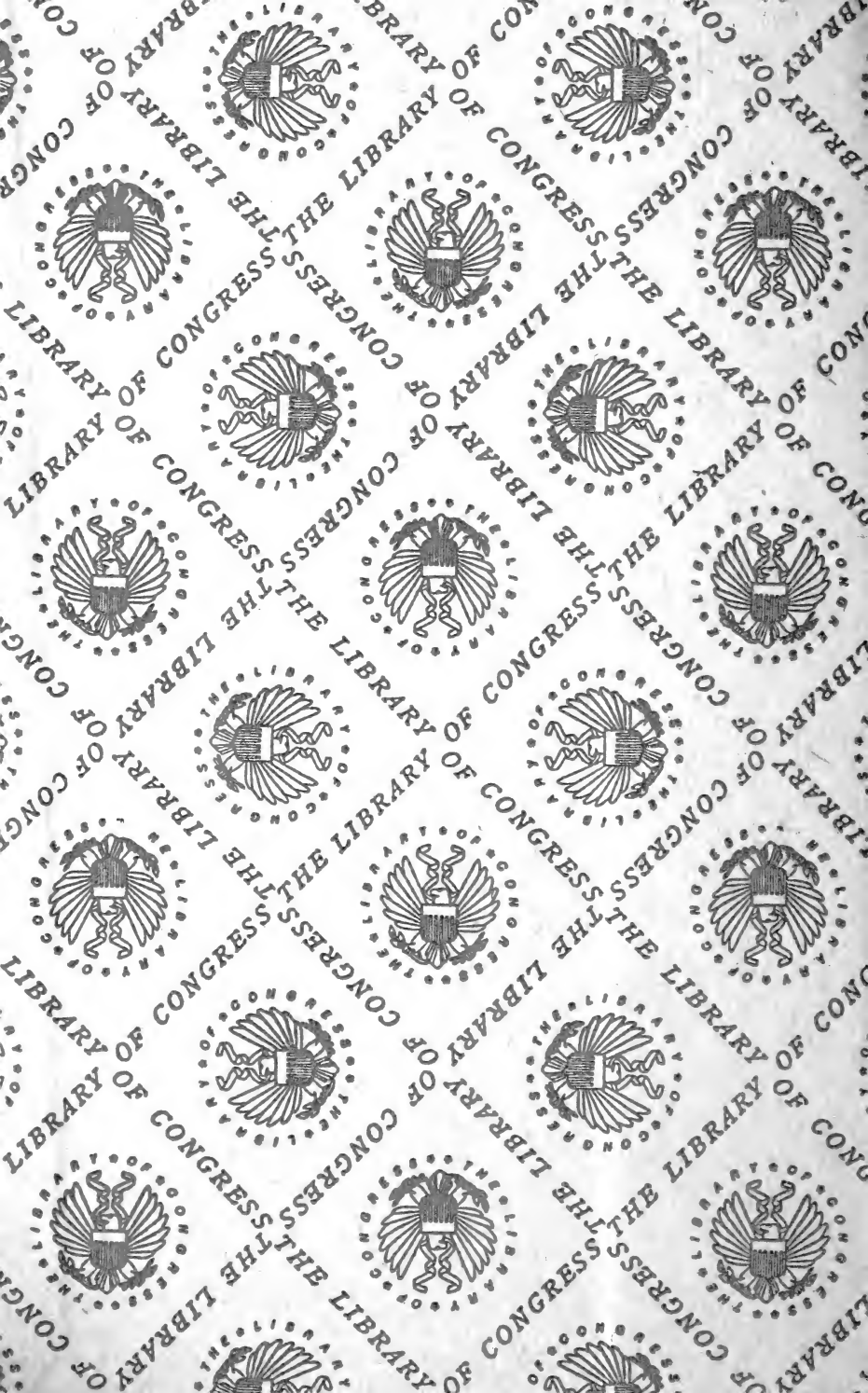
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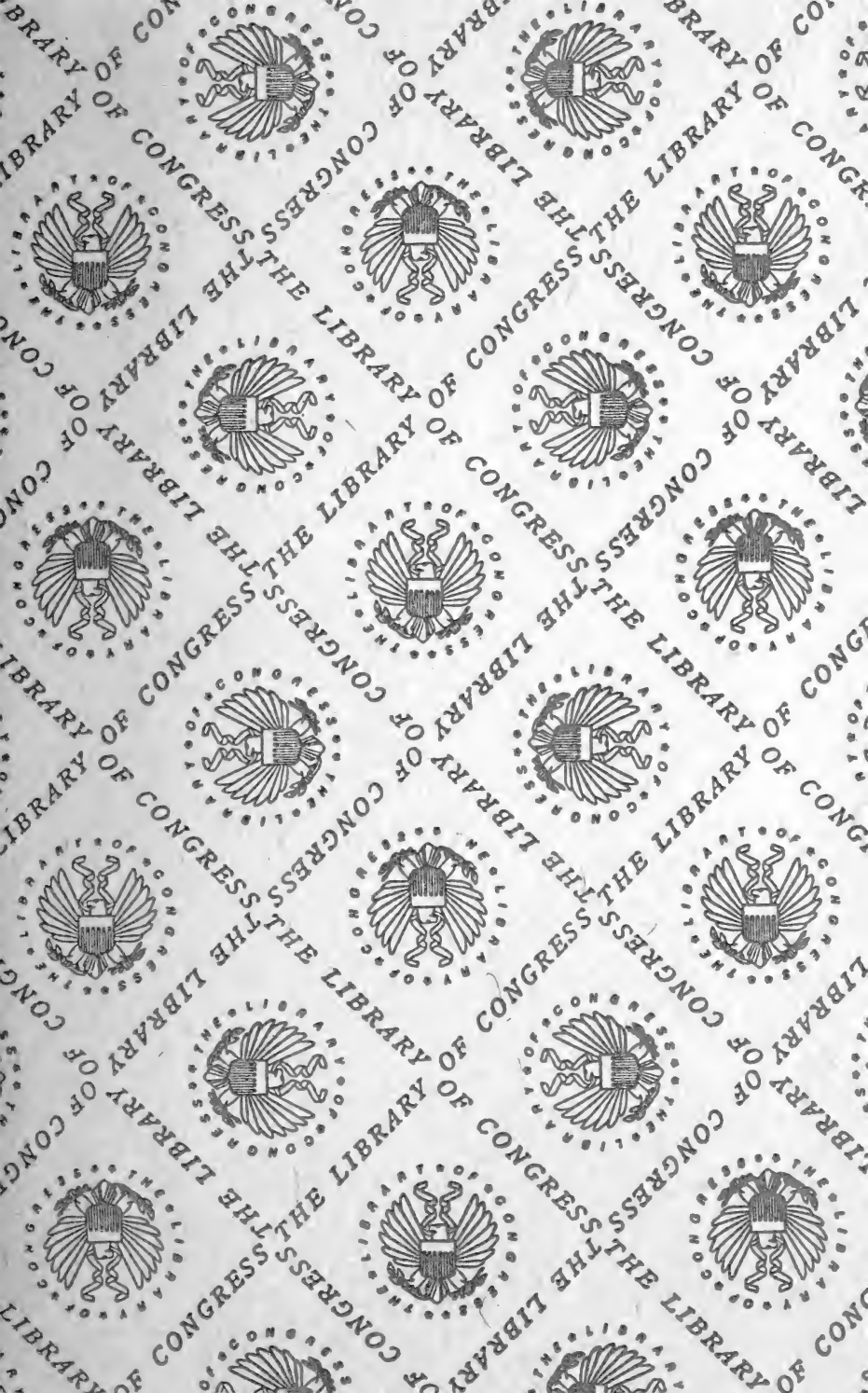
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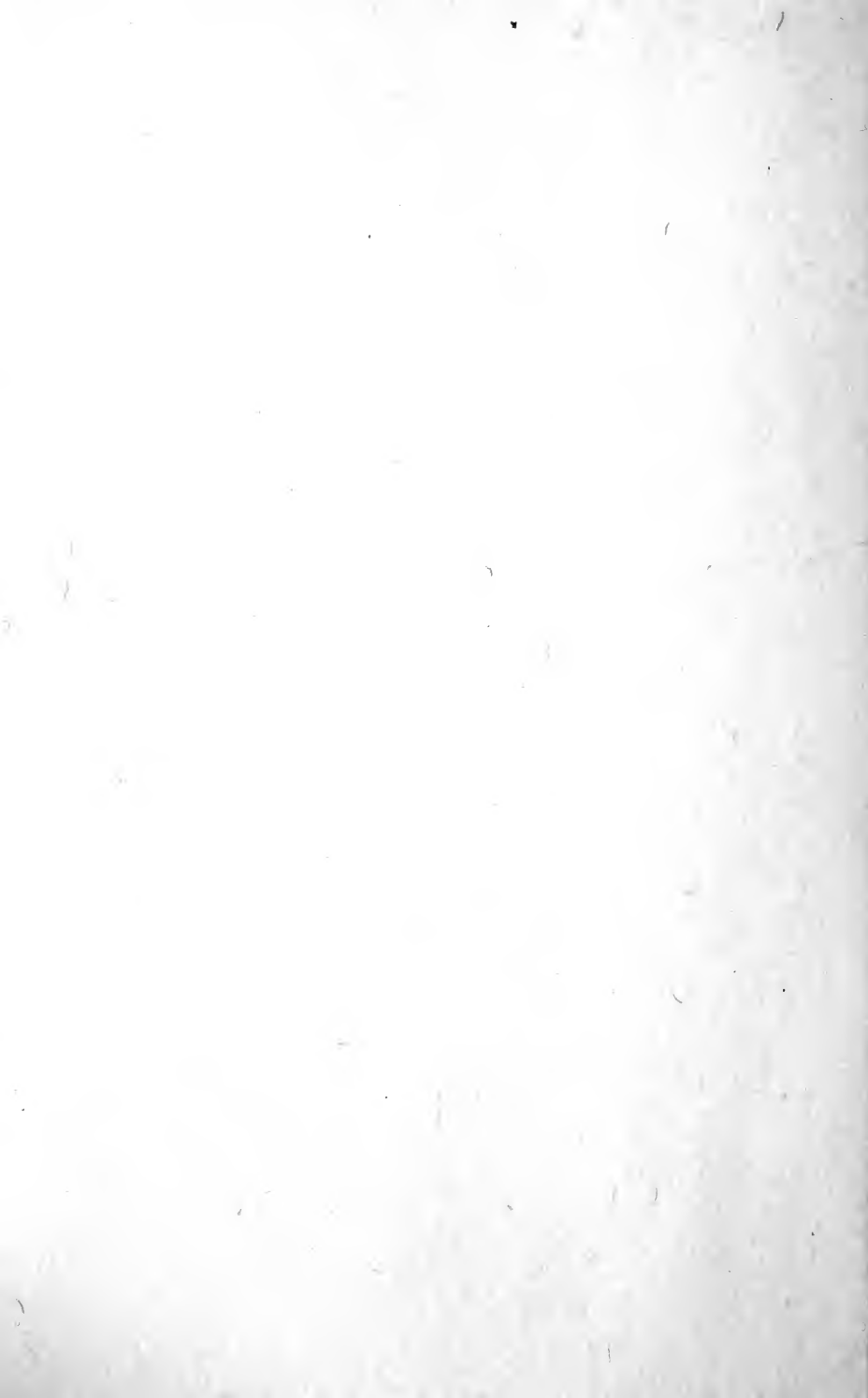
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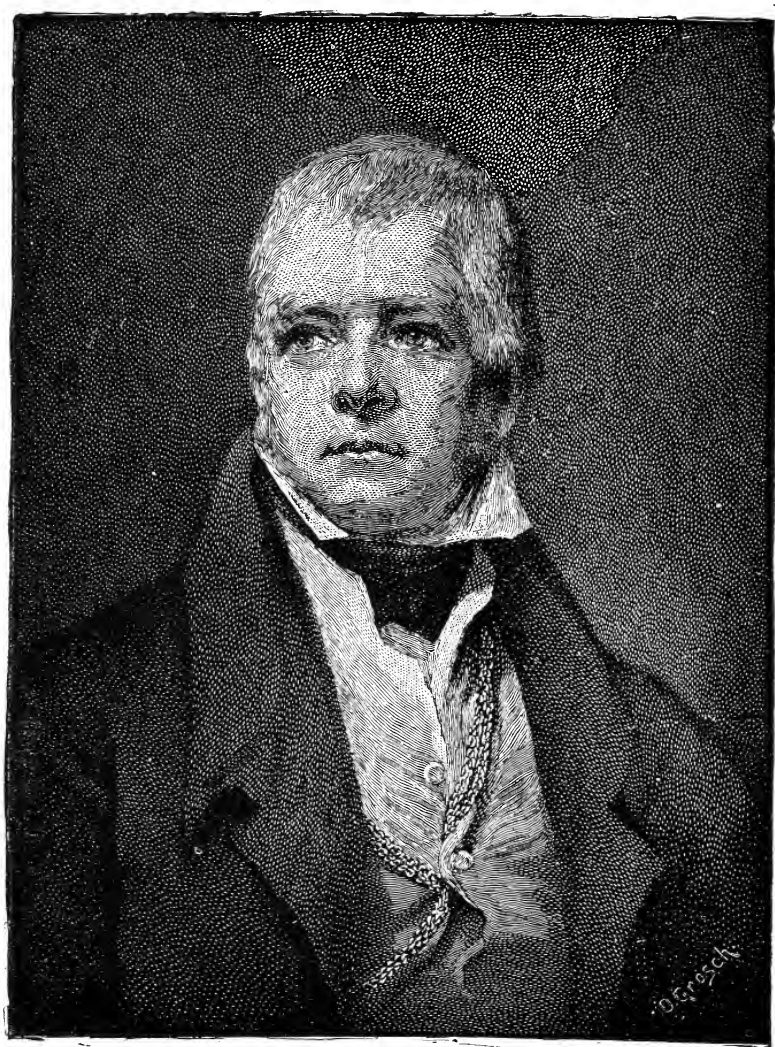


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SIR WALTER SCOTT

Merrill's English Texts

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY GEORGE A. WASHBURNE, DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH, CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, TOLEDO, OHIO



NEW YORK
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Merrill's English Texts

THIS series of books includes in complete editions those masterpieces of English Literature that are best adapted for the use of schools and colleges. The editors of the several volumes are chosen for their special qualifications in connection with the texts issued under their individual supervision, but familiarity with the practical needs of the classroom, no less than sound scholarship, characterizes the editing of every book in the series.

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PREFATORY NOTE

IN preparing the short biographical sketch of Sir Walter Scott I have relied mainly on the *Autobiography*, *Lockhart's Life of Scott*, and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The Historical Basis of the Poem has been taken from Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, and I have thought it wise to add the author's own preface to *The Lady of the Lake*. The questions which follow the notes and the paragraphs on the critical study of the poem are intended to be merely suggestive of intensive study and to be handled as the instructor thinks best. The text of this edition is that of Black's *Author's Edition*, with Rolfe's corrections.

G. A. W.



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INTRODUCTION

SIR WALTER SCOTT

IN Sir Walter Scott the two literary movements of the eighteenth century meet: the first, the triumph of romantic poetry, which reached its highest development later in the works of Wordsworth and Coleridge; and the second, the success of the narrative form of literature known as the novel, which had just come into prominence. Where a few felt drawn toward the poetry of Wordsworth, and those few after deep meditation, Scott's audience was immediate and most enthusiastic. He took the public by storm with his first original work — a series of spirited romances, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*. Although no better stories had been told in English verse and their vogue was very great, the fickle public turned to Byron as soon as his early romances appeared; and then it was, in 1814, that Scott, nothing daunted by the knowledge that he had lost favor in the field of romantic poetry, gave to the world anonymously the narrative of adventure, humor, and charm known as *Waverley*. In quick succession came the series of the Waverley novels. When the authorship was found out, Sir Walter Scott, who had first attracted attention through the medium of metrical romance, was recognized as the creator of a new form of narrative prose literature. "So potent was his genius," says Andrew Lang, "so inspiring the martial tramp and clang of his measures, that he made the New World listen to the accents of the Old."

Walter Scott was born at Edinburgh on the fifteenth day of August, 1771. His father was writer to the Signet, or an attorney-at-law, with a large practice. His mother was the daughter

of a professor in Edinburgh University. Walter was the ninth of twelve children, of whom the first six died young.

His boyhood was unusual. "I was," says Scott in his autobiography, "an uncommonly healthy child until I was about eighteen months old. One night, however, I exhibited an intense reluctance to be put to bed; and after having been chased around the room I was with difficulty consigned to my dormitory. It was the last time I was to show such personal agility. In the morning I was affected with fever; and in the course of three days afterwards it was discovered I had lost the power of my right leg." At the advice of Dr. John Rutherford, his grandfather, he was sent to live in the home of his father's father, Robert Scott, in the little village of Sandy-Knowe in Roxburgshire. The importance of these early days cannot be overestimated. In his fourth year he was sent to Bath in the care of his aunt, Miss Janet Scott, and there he remained about a year, learning to read at a day school in the neighborhood and profiting much by the companionship of his aunt, who read aloud to him old English and Scottish ballads until he could repeat long passages.

From Bath he returned first to Edinburgh and then again to Sandy-Knowe, and when about eight years old he was removed to Prestonpans, as it was thought the sea bathing might prove beneficial to his lameness. Here he met an old military veteran, Dalgetty by name, who afterward became the original of Captain Dugald Dalgetty, whom with his redoubtable war horse, Gustavus Adolphus, readers of *The Legend of Montrose* hold in pleasant remembrance. From Prestonpans Scott was taken back to his father's house in Georges' Square, Edinburgh, and later in 1778 he became a pupil in the Edinburgh High School.

From the shepherds at his grandfather's home in Sandy-Knowe, from his grandfather, in whose youth the old Border depredations were a matter of recent tradition, from his Aunt Janet, and from the old books found at random about the house—such as collections of ballads, McPherson's *Ossian*, Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, and Josephus's *Wars of the Jews*—the boy had stored his mind with many wild stories and much history.

concerning early Scotland and the brave deeds of the old Borderers.

The period from the time he entered the Edinburgh High School until 1786, when he was apprenticed to his father, was really the formative period of Scott's life. As a pupil in the Edinburgh High School, he appears to have been by no means remarkable either for proficiency or for diligence; but his leisure hours were employed to good advantage in reading aloud to his mother, a woman of good taste and deep feeling, who succeeded in inculcating in his opening mind a discriminating love of literature. A list of books read by Scott before he became a man would seem to us most surprising, because of their general merit and wide range. Along with this desire for reading came a love of natural beauty acquired during his stay with his aunt at Kelso, where it was thought best to send him after a few years at Edinburgh.

It was while attending the grammar school at Kelso that he became acquainted with James and John Ballantyne. According to James Ballantyne, Scott was then devoted to antiquarian lore and was certainly the best story-teller he ever heard. "In the intervals of school hours," says Ballantyne, "it was our constant practice to walk together by the banks of the Tweed, and his stories appeared to be quite inexhaustible." This friendship with the Ballantynes continued through life, John having a share in the publication of many of Scott's works, while James was the printer of nearly all of them.

Scott enrolled himself in 1783 in the humanity or Latin class under Professor Hill at the University of Edinburgh and in the Greek class under Professor Dalzel; the only other class for which he matriculated at the University was that of logic, under Professor Bruce in 1785. He made some progress with modern languages. He learned Spanish and read Cervantes; he learned Italian and read Tasso and Ariosto; he steeped his mind in mediæval romance and legend, and he still retained his fondness for the old ballads.

Here, quite naturally, Scott's life divides into two main endeavors: the one, the practice of law, uncongenial and con-

sequently without considerable recompense; and the other, developing gradually, the pouring forth of the wonderful Scottish and historical romances which mark his brilliant literary career.

When fifteen, in 1786, he was apprenticed to his father for five years, and at twenty-one, July 10, 1792, he was called to the bar as an advocate. Lockhart tells us that Scott became a sound lawyer and might have been a great one. But he had the strongest aversion to the dry technicalities of law, to the confinement and dull routine of office. His desk was usually supplied with a store of works of fiction, and with eagerness he sought out and read everything that had reference to knight-errantry. His amusements consisted of excursions on foot or on horseback. When he saw an old castle or a battlefield, his imagination immediately peopled it with combatants in their proper costumes, and his hearers were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of his description. In *Redgauntlet* he gives us, in the person of Alan Fairford, a vivid picture of the tastes and occupations of this period of his own life. The love for antiquarian lore, which so impressed James Ballantyne, was still his ruling passion, while his necessities were not so great as to make an exclusive application to his profession imperative.

Although he could speak fluently at the bar, Scott's mind was not at all of a forensic cast and he was too much the abstract scholar to assume readily the mental attitude of an adroit pleader. He kept to the law for fourteen years or until he was thirty-five. He led a gay life and was extremely popular. He was appointed adjutant to a cavalry corps called the Royal Midlothian Regiment of Cavalry in 1779, an episode that he always looked back upon with the greatest pleasure. At twenty-eight he was appointed to the office of deputy sheriff of Selkirk, which secured him an annual salary of three hundred pounds, and seven years later he was elected Clerk of Quarter Sessions, a quarterly court of the justices of the peace of the county. Assured of the salary from this position, about eight hundred pounds at first, and increased later to thirteen hundred pounds, he gave up his practice at the bar, and decided that literature should thereafter form the main business of his life.

As he had inherited between five and six thousand pounds from a paternal uncle, and had a share of his deceased father's estate, his retirement from the bar was probably the most salutary thing he could have done.

In his nineteenth year, while still apprenticed to his father, Scott fell in love with Margaret, daughter of Sir John and Lady Jane Stuart Belches of Ivernay. For some reason, most probably the difference in their social position, the hope that he might one day marry her was definitely abandoned. Shortly afterward, during a visit to the English lakes, Scott met Miss Margaret Charpentier, the daughter of a French royalist who had fallen a victim to the excesses of the French Revolution. This lady he married at St. Mary's Church, Carlisle, on Christmas Eve, 1797. The bride's dark brown eyes, black hair, and olive complexion gave her a rather foreign appearance; her manners were somewhat foreign too, and she never lost the French accent in her speech. She possessed both beauty and some little fortune — about five hundred pounds annually — and was admirably suited to Scott both as a poet and as a man of the world. She died in 1826, leaving two sons and two daughters, the elder of whom married J. G. Lockhart, afterward Scott's biographer.

Scott's literary career may be said to have commenced when he was twenty-five. In 1796, the year in which Burns died, he made his first appearance as a writer with a translation of *Lenore* and *The Wild Huntsman* from the German of Bürger, which met with a favorable reception from a somewhat limited public. His first real literary success was his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in 1802. The edition was at once exhausted, and Scott found himself famous. In rapid succession came *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), forty-four thousand copies of which were sold before 1830, *Marmion* (1808), and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810). He now felt that in these first three successes he had exhausted his material, that he was not a poetic genius, as Burns was. We can see how accurately Scott had gauged matters when we know that only two years later (1812) Byron became the popular favorite through the great success of his *Childe Harold*.

By chance one day Scott found the manuscript of a narrative begun and laid away some years before. He read it over, finished it quickly, and it appeared anonymously in 1814 as *Waverley*. His success as a poet was eclipsed by this new success. For many years the secret of the author's identity was kept, the great publishers of London and Edinburgh vying with each other in their efforts to buy a share in this first novel and the remarkable series which followed: *Guy Mannering*, in which we find the characters of Dandie Dinmont and Meg Merrilies the gypsy, was published in 1815; *The Antiquary*, Scott's favorite, *The Black Dwarf*, and *Old Mortality*, in 1816; *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Midlothian* with the pathetic story of Effie Deans and her sister Jeanie, one of Scott's finest characters, in 1818; *Ivanhoe* with its familiar characters of Richard Cœur de Lion, Rebecca, Rowena, and Robin Hood, in 1819; and *Kenilworth*, the romance of Elizabethan England woven around the story of Amy Robsart, in 1821.

Aside from his literary success, Sir Walter Scott stands as a true exponent of nobility and fine manhood in his private life. In 1805 Scott had formed a secret partnership with James Ballantyne, the friend of his youth, and had embarked in the printing business. He founded soon afterward a publishing house with John Ballantyne, but neither Scott nor John Ballantyne was a good business man and the concern was unprofitable from the beginning. The novels had been sold to Constable, the distinguished publisher of Edinburgh, but by the terms of the sale Constable had been required to buy a large part of the stock of John Ballantyne & Co. in which Scott was a shareholder. In 1826, six years after Scott had been created a baronet by King George IV and after he had been elected President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, so that he seemed to be beyond the reach of adverse fortune, the house of Constable & Co. was declared bankrupt. The printing firm of James Ballantyne & Co. held Constable's notes for large sums, and Scott and his partners found it necessary to declare their inability to meet business obligations. In the same year Lady Scott, who had been an invalid for some time, died, and Sir Walter himself

began to fail in health. But he bravely set to work to pay off his indebtedness. He disliked the idea of being made a bankrupt publicly, and asked to be allowed to execute a trust-conveyance for the benefit of his creditors, saying that he would let no man lose by him if life were spared.

Offers of assistance came from all sides, but with his brave slogan, "Time and I against any two," he set to work to pay off his indebtedness. He might have declared himself bankrupt, but "for this," he says, "in a court of honor I should deserve to lose my spurs." Fortunately his family was provided for and his estate saved, since it was entailed, and he settled down to literary work to release his indebtedness. The proceeds of his very first work published after the failure, the celebrated novel *Woodstock*, amounted to more than eight thousand pounds, and the next year two editions of *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* appeared, so that before Christmas, 1827, nearly forty thousand pounds had been realized. When Scott died, his trustees had an undistributed balance on hand which, with his life insurance and the money secured by the sale of his copyrights, was sufficient to pay all his debts.

We cannot turn to the final page of Scott's life without a brief view of the place so intimately connected with his life, his ambitions, and his endeavors — Abbotsford. Scott had lived first at Tasswade on the Esk, six miles from Edinburgh, and had quitted Tasswade for Ashestiel in Selkirkshire, where he had lived in the house belonging to a cousin. But in 1811, in the first flush of the success of his poetry, he bought the estate of Abbotsford on the Tweed, with which his name is forever associated. Here he spent large sums enlarging, developing, and beautifying his ever-growing possessions, superintending the details of the improvements himself, and entertaining his many friends. When finally completed, the estate represented an immense expenditure and was costly in maintenance. Lady Scott at this time naively remarked that "Abbotsford was very like a large hotel, except that people did not pay." It was most pleasantly situated on the banks of the Tweed in the vicinity of Dryburgh Abbey, and the famous ruins of Melrose Abbey could

be seen from the grounds, which had in fact once belonged to the abbot, — a splendid location for the spacious estate of a landed proprietor.

In the winter of 1830 Scott's health began to fail, and before the close of that year he was attacked with apoplexy. He agreed to spend the ensuing winter in a warmer climate, and the British government placed a vessel at his disposal. He visited Malta, Naples, and Rome. In May, 1832, he went to Venice and made his way north through the Rhine country, reaching London in the early part of June. The river Tweed, Scotland, his native heath, were all calling him; 'his great desire was to reach Abbotsford before he died, and in July he was prepared for the journey. He remained unconscious until he arrived within the sight of his own towers. He grew steadily weaker, and died peaceably September 21, 1832, in the second month of his sixty-second year. About seven years before, he had written in his diary, "Square the odds and good night, Sir Walter, about sixty. I care not, if I leave my name unstained and my family property settled. *Sat est vixisse.*"

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF THE POEM

The following paragraphs are taken from Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*.

Highlanders and Borderers. There were two great divisions of the country, the Highlands namely, and the Borders, which were so much wilder and more barbarous than the others, that they might be said to be altogether without law; and although they were nominally subjected to the king of Scotland, yet when he desired to execute any justice in those great districts, he could not do so otherwise than by marching there in person, at the head of a strong body of forces, and seizing upon the offenders, and putting them to death with little or no form of trial. Such a rough course of justice, perhaps, made these disorderly countries quiet for a short time, but it rendered them still more averse to the royal government in their hearts, and disposed on the slightest occasion to break out, either into disorders amongst themselves, or into open rebellion. I must give you some more particular account of these wild and uncivilized districts of Scotland, and of the particular sort of people who were their inhabitants, that you may know what I mean when I speak of Highlanders and Borderers.

The Highlands of Scotland, so called from the rocky and mountainous character of the country, consist of a very large proportion of the northern parts of that kingdom. It was into these pathless wildernesses that the Romans drove the ancient inhabitants of Great Britain; and it was from these that they afterward sallied to invade and distress that part of Britain which the Romans had conquered, and in some degree civilized. The inhabitants of the Highlands spoke, and still speak, a language totally different from the Lowland Scots. That last language does not greatly differ from English, and the inhabitants of both countries easily understand each other, though neither of them comprehend the Gaelic, which is the language of the Highlanders. The dress of these mountaineers was also different from that of the Lowlanders. They wore a plaid, or mantle of frieze, or of

striped stuff called tartan, one end of which being wrapped round the waist, formed a short petticoat, which descended to the knee, while the rest was folded round them like a sort of cloak. They had buskins made of raw hide; and those who could get a bonnet, had that covering for their heads, though many never wore one during their whole lives, but had only their own shaggy hair tied back by a leathern strap. They went always armed, carrying bows and arrows, large swords, which they wielded with both hands, called claymores, pole-axes, and daggers for close fight. For defense, they had a round wooden shield, or target, stuck full of nails; and their great men had shirts of mail, not unlike to the flannel shirts now worn, only composed of links of iron, instead of threads of worsted; but the common men were so far from desiring armor, that they sometimes threw their plaids away, and fought in their shirts, which they wore very long and large, after the Irish fashion.

This part of the Scottish nation was divided into clans, that is, tribes. The persons composing each of these clans believed themselves all to be descended, at some distant period, from the same common ancestor, whose name they usually bore. Thus, one tribe was called MacDonald, which signifies the sons of Donald; another MacGregor, or the sons of Gregor; MacNeil, the sons of Neil, and so on. Every one of these tribes had its own separate chief, or commander, whom they supposed to be the immediate representative of the great father of the tribe from whom they were all descended. To this chief they paid the most unlimited obedience, and willingly followed his commands in peace or war; not caring although, in doing so, they transgressed the laws of the king, or went into rebellion against the king himself. Each tribe lived in a valley, or district of the mountains, separated from the others; and they often made war upon and fought desperately with each other. But with Lowlanders they were always at war. They differed from them in language, in dress, and in manners; and they believed that the richer grounds of the low country had formerly belonged to their ancestors, and therefore they made incursions upon it, and plundered it without mercy. The Lowlanders, on the other

hand, equal in courage and superior in discipline, gave many severe checks to the Highlanders; and thus there was almost constant war or discord between them, though natives of the same country.

Some of the most powerful of the Highland chiefs set themselves up as independent sovereigns. Such were the famous Lords of the Isles, called MacDonald, to whom the island, called the Hebrides, lying on the northwest of Scotland, might be said to belong in property. These petty sovereigns made alliances with the English in their own name. They took the part of Robert the Bruce in the wars, and joined him with their forces. We shall find that, after his time, they gave great disturbance to Scotland. The Lords of Lorn, MacDouglas by name, were also extremely powerful; and you have seen that they were able to give battle to Bruce, and to defeat him and place him in the greatest jeopardy. He revenged himself afterward by driving John of Lorn out of the country, and by giving great part of his possessions to his own nephew, Sir Colin Campbell, who became the first of the great family of Argyll, which afterward enjoyed such power in the Highlands.

Upon the whole, you can easily understand that these Highland clans, living among such high and inaccessible mountains, and paying obedience to no one save their own chiefs, should have been instrumental in disturbing the tranquillity of the kingdom of Scotland. They had many virtues, being a kind, brave, and hospitable people, and remarkable for their fidelity to their chiefs; but they were restless, revengeful, fond of plunder, and delighting rather in war than in peace, and disorder than in repose.

The Border counties were in a state little more favorable to a quiet or peaceful government. In some respects the inhabitants of the counties of Scotland lying opposite to England greatly resembled the Highlanders, and particularly in their being, like them, divided into clans, and having chiefs, whom they obeyed in preference to the king, or the officers whom he placed among them. How clanship came to prevail in the Highlands and Borders, and not in the provinces which separated them from

each other, it is not easy to conjecture, but the fact was so. The Borders are not, indeed, so mountainous and inaccessible a country as the Highlands; but they also are full of hills, especially on the more western part of the frontier, and were in early times covered with forests, and divided by small rivers and morasses, into dales and valleys, where the different clans lived, making war sometimes on the English, sometimes on each other, and sometimes on the more civilized country which lay behind them.

But though the Borderers resembled the Highlanders in their mode of government and habits of plundering, and, as it may be truly added, in their disobedience to the general government of Scotland, yet they differed in many particulars. The Highlanders fought always on foot, the Borderers were all horsemen. The Borderers spoke the same language with the Lowlanders, wore the same sort of dress, and carried the same arms. Being accustomed to fight against the English, they were also much better disciplined than the Highlanders. But in point of obedience to the Scottish government, they were not much different from the clans of the north.

James V of Scotland. James V displayed most of the qualities of a wise and good prince. He was handsome in his person, and resembled his father in the fondness for military exercises, and the spirit of chivalrous honor which James IV loved to display. He also inherited his father's love of justice, and his desire to establish and enforce wise and equal laws, which should protect the weak against the oppression of the great. It was easy to make laws, but to put them in vigorous exercise was of much greater difficulty; and in his attempt to accomplish this laudable purpose, James often incurred the ill will of the more powerful nobles. He was a well-educated and accomplished man; and like his ancestor, James I, was a poet and a musician. He had, however, his defects. He avoided his father's failing of profusion, having no hoarded treasures to employ on pomp and show; but he rather fell into the opposite fault, being of a temper too parsimonious; and though he loved state and display, he endeavored to gratify that taste as economically as possible, so that he has been censured as rather close and covetous. He was also,

though the foibles seem inconsistent, fond of pleasure, and disposed to too much indulgence. It must be added, that when provoked, he was unrelenting even to cruelty; for which he had some apology, considering the ferocity of the subjects over whom he reigned. But, on the whole, James V was an amiable man and a good sovereign.

His first care was to bring the Borders of Scotland to some degree of order. These, as you were formerly told, were inhabited by tribes of men, forming each a different clan, as they were called, and obeying no orders save those which were given by their chiefs. These chiefs were supposed to represent the first founder of the name, or family. The attachment of the clansmen to the chief was very great: indeed, they paid respect to no one else. In this the Borderers agreed with the Highlanders, as also in their love of plunder and neglect of the general laws of the country. But the Border men wore no tartan dress, and served almost always on horseback, whereas the Highlanders acted always on foot. You will also remember that the Borderers spoke the Scottish language, and not the Gaelic tongue used by the mountaineers.

The situation of these clans on the frontiers exposed them to constant war; so that they thought of nothing else but of collecting bands of their followers together, and making incursions, without much distinction, on the English, on the Lowland (or inland) Scots, or upon each other. They paid little respect either to times of truce or treaties of peace, but exercised their depredations without regard to either, and often occasioned wars betwixt England and Scotland which would not otherwise have taken place. As their insolence had risen to a high pitch after the field of Flodden had thrown the country into confusion, James V resolved to take very severe measures against them.

His first step was to secure the persons of the principal chieftains by whom these disorders were privately encouraged. The Earl of Bothwell, the Lord Home, Lord Maxwell, Scott of Buccleuch, Ker of Fairniehirst, and other powerful chiefs, who might have opposed the king's purposes, were seized, and imprisoned in separate fortresses in the inland country.

James then assembled an army, in which warlike purposes were united with those of sylvan sport; for he ordered all the gentlemen in the wild districts which he intended to visit to bring their best dogs, as if his only purpose had been to hunt the deer in those desolate regions. This was to prevent the Borderers from taking the alarm, in which case they would have retreated into their mountains and fastnesses, from whence it would have been difficult to dislodge them.

These men had indeed no distinct idea of the offences which they had committed, and consequently no apprehension of the king's displeasure against them. The laws had been so long silent in that remote and disorderly country, that the outrages which were practiced by the strong against the weak seemed to the perpetrators the natural course of society, and to present nothing that was worthy of punishment.

Thus, as the king in the beginning of his expedition suddenly approached the castle of Piers Cockburn of Henderland, that baron was in the act of providing a great entertainment to welcome him, when James caused him to be suddenly seized on and executed. Adam Scott of Tushielaw, called the King of the Border, met the same fate.

In the like manner James proceeded against the Highland chiefs; and by executions, forfeitures, and other severe measures he brought the northern mountaineers, as he had already done those of the south, into comparative subjection. He then set at liberty the Border chiefs, and others whom he had imprisoned, lest they should have offered any hindrance to the course of his justice.

James was very fond of hunting, and when he pursued that amusement in the Highlands he used to wear the peculiar dress of that country, having a long and wide Highland shirt and a jacket of Tartan velvet, with plaid hose, and everything else corresponding. The accounts for these are in the books of his chamberlain, still preserved.

The reign of James V was not alone distinguished by his personal adventures and pastimes, but is honorably remembered on account of wise laws made for the government of his people,

and for restraining the crimes and violence which were frequently practiced among them; especially those of assassination, burning of houses, and driving of cattle — the usual and ready means by which powerful chiefs avenged themselves of their feudal enemies.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

After the success of *Marmion*, I felt inclined to exclaim with Ulysses in the *Odyssey*:

“One venturous game my hand has won to-day —
Another, gallants, yet remains to play.”

The ancient manners, the habits and customs of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds and political discussions which, half a century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem, the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honorable foe. The poems of Ossian had, by their popularity, sufficiently shown that if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success.

I had also read a great deal, seen much, and heard more of that romantic country where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful and so deeply imprinted on my recollections, was a labor of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced. The frequent custom of James IV, and particularly of James V, to walk through their kingdom in disguise, afforded me the hint of an incident which never fails to be interesting if managed with the slightest address or dexterity.

I may now confess, however, that the employment, though attended with great pleasure, was not without its doubts and anxieties. A lady, to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived, during her whole life, on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me at the time when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning (that happening to be the most convenient to me for composition). At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. "Do not be so rash," she said, "my dearest cousin. You are already popular — more so, perhaps, than you yourself will believe, or than even I, or other partial friends, can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high — do not rashly attempt to climb higher, and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favorite will not be permitted even to stumble with impunity." I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose:

"He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch
To gain or lose it all."

"If I fail," I said, for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, "it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and I will write prose for life: you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed,

""Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
The dirk, and the feather, and a'!""

Afterward I showed my affectionate and anxious critic the first canto of the poem, which reconciled her to my imprudence. Nevertheless, although I answered thus confidently, with the obstinacy often said to be proper to those who bear my surname, I acknowledge that my confidence was considerably shaken by the warning of her excellent taste and unbiased friendship. Nor was I much comforted by her retraction of the unfavorable judgment, when I recollected how likely a natural partiality

was to effect that change of opinion. In such cases, affection rises like a light on the canvas, improves any favorable tints which it formerly exhibited, and throws its defects into the shade.

I remember that about the same time a friend started in to "heeze up my hope," like the "sportsman with his cutty gun," in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field sports, which we often pursued together.

As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of *The Lady of the Lake*, in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favorable a representative of readers at large. It is, of course, to be supposed, that I determined rather to guide my opinion by what my friend might appear to feel, than by what he might think fit to say. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention through the whole account of the stag hunt, till the dogs threw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared, in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of reverie which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale. Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the king with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively, but somewhat licentious, old ballad, in which the dénouement of a royal intrigue takes place as follows:

“He took a bugle frae his side,
He blew both loud and shrill,
And four-and-twenty belted knights
Came skipping ower the hill;
Then he took out a little knife,
Let a’ his duddies fa’,
And he was the brawest gentleman,
That was amang them a’,
And we’ll go no more a-roving,” etc.

This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camlet cloak, was but a trifle, yet it troubled me; and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect, with which the Irish postboy is said to reserve a “trot for the avenue.”

I took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story. I recollect in particular, that to ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale, I went into Perthshire to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable.

After considerable delay, *The Lady of the Lake* appeared in June, 1810; and its success was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual who had so boldly courted her favors for three successive times had not as yet been shaken. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But, as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to his late Majesty, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite, so I can, with honest truth, exculpate myself from having been at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was

either so ungrateful, or so superabundantly candid, as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality to me, which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavored to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement.

It may be that I did not, in this continued course of scribbling, consult either the interest of the public or my own. But the former had effectual means of defending themselves, and could, by their coldness, sufficiently check any approach to intrusion; but, for myself, I had now for several years dedicated my hours so much to literary labor that I should have felt difficulty in employing myself otherwise; and so, like Dogberry, I generously bestowed all my tediousness on the public, comforting myself with the reflection, that if posterity should think me undeserving of the favor with which I was regarded by my contemporaries, "they could not but say I *had* the crown," and had enjoyed for a time that popularity which is so much coveted.

I conceived, however, that I held the distinguished situation I had obtained, however unworthily, rather like the champion of pugilism¹ on the condition of being always ready to show proofs of my skill, than in the manner of the champion of chivalry, who performs his duties only on rare and solemn occasions. I was in any case conscious that I could not long hold a situation which the caprice, rather than the judgment, of the public, had bestowed upon me, and preferred being deprived of my precedence by some more worthy rival, to sinking into contempt for my indolence, and losing my reputation by what Scottish lawyers call the *negative prescription*. Accordingly, those who choose to look at the Introduction to *Rokeby* will be able to trace the steps by which I declined as a poet to figure as a novelist; as the ballad

¹ "In twice five years the greatest living poet,
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing," etc.

— *Don Juan*, Canto IX, Stanza 55.

says, "Queen Eleanor sunk at Charing Cross to rise again at Queenhithe."

It only remains for me to say, that, during my short preëminence of popularity, I faithfully observed the rules of moderation which I had resolved to follow before I began my course as a man of letters. If a man is determined to make a noise in the world, he is as sure to encounter abuse and ridicule, as he who gallops furiously through a village must reckon on being followed by the curs in full cry. Experienced persons know, that in stretching to flog the latter, the rider is very apt to catch a bad fall; nor is an attempt to chastise a malignant critic attended with less danger to the author. On this principle, I let parody, burlesque, and squibs find their own level; and while the latter hissed most fiercely I was cautious never to catch them up, as schoolboys do to throw them back against the naughty boy who fired them off, wisely remembering that they are, in such cases, apt to explode in the handling. Let me add, that my reign ¹ (since Byron has so called it) was marked by some instances of good nature as well as patience. I never refused a literary person of merit such services in smoothing his way to the public as were in my power; and I had the advantage, rather an uncommon one with our irritable race, to enjoy general favor, without incurring permanent ill will, so far as is known to me, among any of my contemporaries.

W. S.

ABBOTSFORD, April, 1830.

¹ "Sir Walter reigned before me," etc.

— *Don Juan*, Canto XI, Stanza 57.

CRITICAL STUDY OF THE POEM

IN *The Lady of the Lake* — a story softer and more idyllic than *Marmion*, more interesting and better developed than *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* — Scott was approaching the development of broad historical plot which was to make him famous later in his prose romances. Any attempt at a careful view of this poem must embrace an investigation of the writing of the narrative, the scene of the brightly and firmly painted romantic setting, the picturesque but by no means psychologically developed characters, the interpretation of the narrative itself, and some of the more noticeable technicalities involved in its form and meter.

The Lady of the Lake appeared in 1810. The success was immediate. Mr. Cadell, the publisher, said, "The whole country rang with the praises of the poet; crowds set off to view the scenery of Loch Katrine, till then comparatively unknown; and as the book came out just before the season for excursions, every house and inn in that neighborhood was crowded with a constant succession of visitors." It was thought that with two such splendid works to his account as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*, Scott was rash to tempt fate with a third effort. He was even advised against it. But with the first edition of *The Lady of the Lake*, in quarto, two thousand and fifty copies were sold, and within the year four octavo editions were disposed of.

Scott discovered, so far as literary use is concerned, the region which makes the setting of the romance. He had visited the Western Highlands of Perthshire twenty years before, when he was an apprentice at law, and their romantic scenery had charmed him then. At this time the roads were difficult of access and few strangers had visited the country, Loch Katrine and the Trosachs being practically unknown. After he had decided to use these regions of romantic beauty as the background for his story, in the summer of 1809, anxious to renew his recollection and obtain accuracy of description, he revisited that district.

He carefully noted the natural beauty, with a view toward writing some of his descriptions. Then, too, from his many researches in antiquarian lore he knew the traditions of the Scottish Highlanders and Lowlanders, and their dress, customs, and peculiarities, which were to add the quaint touch to the picturesque painting.

The plot was skilfully managed with a literary device of the time, that of concealed identity, and so well managed that even to one who knows the story perfectly the dénouement loses nothing of its dramatic charm and power. In fact, the artistic gracefulness of the whole story is perhaps its greatest excellence — the chase which forms an admirable introduction, the simple courtesy of a delightful heroine, the badinage of the hunter, the game of cross purposes in which Gael and Saxon come into powerful relief in character delineation, all leading toward the inevitable guardroom scene of the Sixth Canto. The plot and the characters stand out boldly from the canvas of the Scottish Highlands.

In interpretation nothing could be simpler than this narrative of pure romance. Here is nothing involved, nothing subtle. As Robert Louis Stevenson says, "Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. *The Lady of the Lake* has no indisputable claim to be a poem, beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best of health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among those slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, *The Lady of the Lake*, or the direct romantic opening, — one of the most spirited and poetical in literature, — 'The stag at eve had drunk his fill.'"

While, as has been hinted in the quotation above, the verse is not perfect, the meter ought to afford little difficulty to the student. *The Lady of the Lake* is written in the romantic measure of English poetry called iambic tetrameter, arranged in rhymed

couplets, and variously combined with trimeters. To make this clear, we should here explain meter somewhat carefully. The chief difference between prose and poetry is that, while prose consists of many irregularly arranged syllables, poetry makes the arrangement regular. Therefore every line of poetry is made up of a certain number of syllable-groups. A line is called monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, and hexameter, as it contains respectively one, two, three, four, five, or six syllable-groups. These groups may be a *trochee*, a foot of one accented and one unaccented syllable; an *iambus* or *iam*, a foot of an unaccented and an accented syllable; a *dactyl* containing three syllables, the first accented and the other two unaccented; an *anapest*, two unaccented and one accented; or a *spondee*, two accented syllables.

The Lady of the Lake is written in iambic tetrameter, or four syllable-groups each containing two syllables, the first unaccented, the second accented, and rhyming in couplets. The first two lines of the poem proper scan thus:

The stag | at eve | had drunk | his fill
Where danced | the moon | on Mo | nan's rill.

The rhyme of the poem is inspired principally by Coleridge's *Christabel*, which was read to Scott by a mutual friend while it was yet in manuscript.

As any arrangement of meter, if not varied, will become monotonous, Scott provides variation in the introductory Spenserian stanzas to each canto, in the different songs of the poem, and in the substitution now and then of the trochee or anapest for the iambus. Each canto opens with one or more Spenserian stanzas, so called because first used by Spenser in his *Fairy Queen*. The Spenserian stanza consists of eight lines of ten syllables followed by a line of twelve syllables, the accent being on the even syllables; that is, the iambic measure. The stanza as a whole is bound together with three sets of rhyme: one for the first and third lines; another for the second, fourth, fifth, and seventh; and a third for the sixth, eighth, and ninth

lines. In the concluding Spenserian stanzas of the poem there is a graceful return to the reference to Scottish Minstrelsy.

The songs throughout the poem are of varying meter. The first song in Canto First is written in trochaic tetrameter, the alternate lines rhyming, as

Soldier | rest! thy | warfare | o'er,
 Sleep the | sleep that | knows not | breaking;
 Dream of | battled | fields no | more,
 Days of | danger, | nights of | waking.

In Canto Second the song of Allan-bane is written in iambic tetrameter with the second and fifth lines iambic trimeter. The rhyming lines are the first, third, and fourth lines; the second and fifth; the sixth and seventh; and the eighth and ninth, as

Not fas | ter yon | der row | ers' might
 Flings from | their oars | the spray,
 Not fas | ter yon | der rip | pling bright,
 That tracks | the shal | lop's course | in light,
 Melts in | the lake | away,
 Than men | from mem | ory erase
 The ben | efits | of for | mer days;
 Then, strang | er, go! | good speed | the while,
 Nor think | again | of the lone | ly isle.

The Boat Song also in Canto Second (ll. 399-438) has a varied meter, being written in dactylic feet. The first four, the seventh, and the tenth lines are dactylic tetrameter, and the remaining lines are dactylic dimeter.

Hail to the | Chief who in | triumph ad | vances!
 Honored and | blessed be the | ever-green | Pine!
 Long may the | tree, in his | banner that | glances,

Flourish, the | shelter and | grace of our | line!
 Heaven send it | happy dew,
 Earth lend it | sap anew.

The most difficult of conception as to meter is the Coronach in Canto Third (ll. 370-393). The meter seems to be anapestic, but it has been called amphibrachic, which is a foot of three syllables, having the first and third unaccented, the second accented. If anapestic, the lines will be scanned thus:

He is gone | on the moun | tain,
 He is lost | to the for | est.

If amphibrachic, the scansion is:

He | is gone on | the mountain,
 He | is lost to | the forest.

By carefully studying the meter here in these three songs which we have chosen, we shall find the others quite simple. Scott's meter is the true English counterpart, if there be one, of the meter of Homer.

Finally, then, what is the enduring charm of *The Lady of the Lake*? The style of the poem is in many places rough and unpolished, owing, no doubt, to the high rate of speed at which Scott wrote. The poet himself said, "I am sensible that if there be anything good about my poetry it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition." The verse works wonderful magic; the vehicle of the story is good. Whether we are conscious of it or not, a virility pervades the narrative which, on the one hand, makes us admire the healthy nature and quick sympathies of the author and, on the other hand, makes us better for having been able to appreciate the work. As John Dennis said, "Whatever was lovely and of good report was loved by him, and the stamp of healthy nature is left on all he has written."

CRITICAL OPINIONS

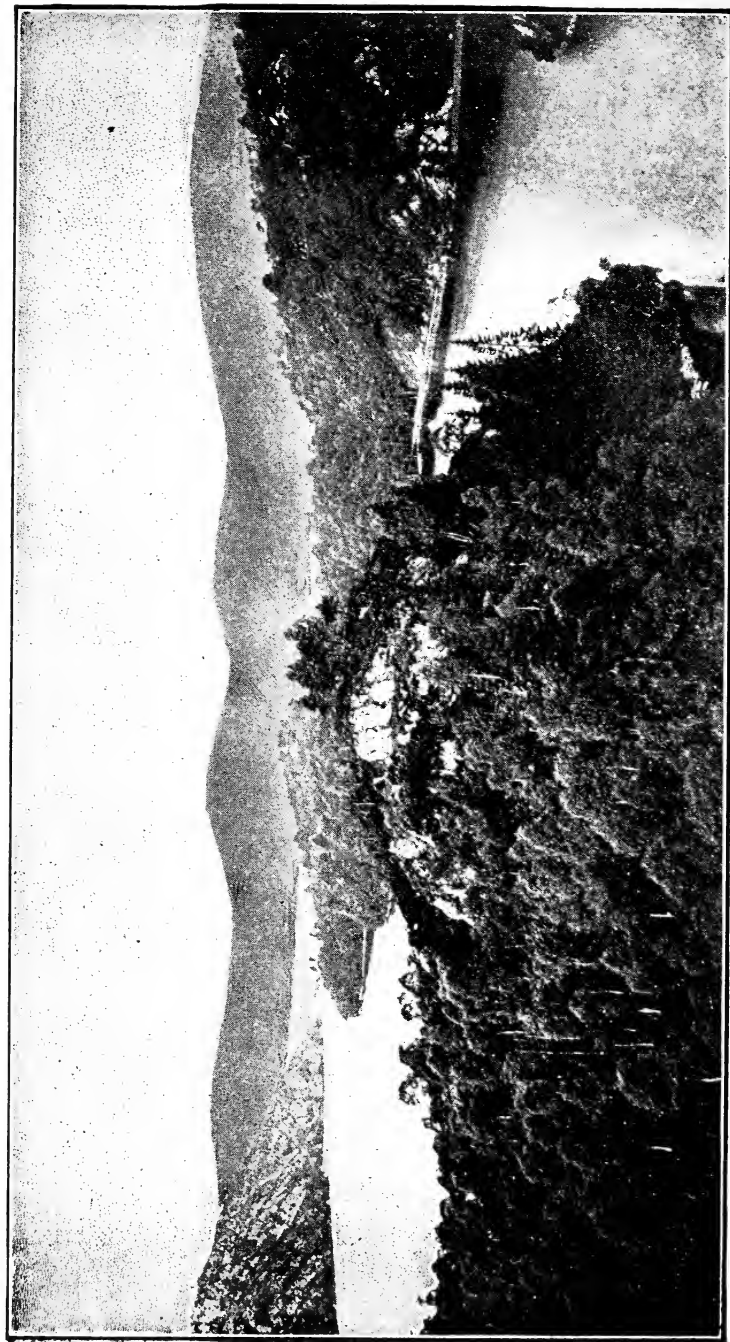
"There is nothing in Mr. Scott, of the serene and majestic style of Milton — or the terse and fine composition of Pope — or of the elaborate elegance and melody of Campbell — or even of the flowing and redundant diction of Southey. But there is a medley of bright images and glowing words, set carelessly and loosely together — a diction tinged successively with the careless richness of Shakespeare, the harshness and antique simplicity of the old romance, the homeliness of vulgar ballads and anecdotes, and the sentimental glitter of the most modern poetry — passing from the borders of the ludicrous to those of the sublime — alternately minute and energetic — sometimes artificial and frequently negligent — but always full of spirit and vivacity — abounding in images that are striking, at first sight, to minds of every texture — and never expressing a sentiment which it can cost the most ordinary reader any exertion to comprehend." — FRANCIS JEFFREY in *The Edinburgh Review*, August, 1810.

"All Scott's verse is written for boys; and boys, generation after generation, will love it with the same freshness of response. It has adventure, manliness, bright landscape, fighting, the obvious emotions; it is like a gallop across the moors in a blithe wind; it has plenty of story, and is almost as easily read as if it were prose. . . . But it is well, perhaps, that there should be a poet for the boys and for those grown-up people who are most like boys." — ARTHUR SYMONS, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 94, page 669, November, 1904.

"In Scott's narrative poems the scenery is accessory and subordinate. It is a picturesque background to his figures, a landscape through which the action rushes like a torrent, catching a hint of color perhaps from rock or tree, but never any image so distinct that it tempts us aside to reverie or meditation." — JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

ARGUMENT

The scene of the following poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of action includes six days and the transactions of each day occupy a canto.



Loch Katrine

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string, — 5
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, 10
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high! 15
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's
matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray; 20

O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:

Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,

Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway, 25
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made 30
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way, 35
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foemen storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste 40
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky; 45
A moment gazed adown the dale,

A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared, 50
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back; 55
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out, 60
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe, 65
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din 70
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
 Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var, 75
 And roused the cavern where, 't is told,
 A giant made his den of old;
 For ere that steep ascent was won,
 High in his pathway hung the sun,
 And many a gallant, stayed perforce, 80
 Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
 And of the trackers of the deer
 Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
 So shrewdly on the mountain-side
 Had the bold burst their mettle tried. 85

V

The noble stag was pausing now
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,
 Where broad extended, far beneath,
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wandered o'er 90
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
 And pondered refuge from his toil,
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
 But nearer was the copsewood gray
 That waved and wept on Loch Achray, 95
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
 Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,
 Held westward with unwearied race, 100
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air; 105
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith, —
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far, 110
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel; 115
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed, 120
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch; 125
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,

Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take. 130

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize, 135
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew:
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared, 140
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook 145
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket shed
Cold dew and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain, 150
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,

The gallant horse exhausted fell. 155
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse, 160
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
'I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed! 165
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!'

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace, 170
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note. 175
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way, 180
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way; 185
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid. 190
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass, 195
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set 200
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair; 205
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes 210
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorne and hazel mingled there; 215
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each cleft a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain 220
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath;
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock; 225
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced, 230
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream. 235

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.

Lost for a space, through thickets veering, 240
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made. 245
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still 250
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken, 255
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won, 260
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay, 265
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand

To sentinel enchanted land.

High on the south, huge Benvenue 270

Down to the lake in masses threw

Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,

The fragments of an earlier world;

A wildering forest feathered o'er

His ruined sides and summit hoar, 275

While on the north, through middle air,

Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed

The stranger, raptured and amazed,

And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried, 280

'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!

On this bold brow, a lordly tower;

In that soft vale, a lady's bower;

On yonder meadow, far away,

The turrets of a cloister gray; 285

How blithely might the bugle-horn

Chide on the lake the lingering morn!

How sweet at eve the lover's lute

Chime when the groves were still and mute!

And when the midnight moon should lave 290

Her forehead in the silver wave,

How solemn on the ear would come

The holy matins' distant hum,

While the deep peal's commanding tone

Should wake, in yonder islet lone, 295

A sainted hermit from his cell,

To drop a bead with every knell!

And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast and lighted hall. 300

XVI

‘Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now — beshrew yon nimble deer —
Like that same hermit’s, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be, 305
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place; —
A summer night in greenwood spent
Were but to-morrow’s merriment: 310
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer. —
I am alone; — my bugle-strain 315
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.’

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound, 320
From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,

That round the promontory steep 325
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow. 330
The boat had touched this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again 335
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art, 340
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face! 345
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown, —
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show 350
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace, —

A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew; 355
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue, —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear, 360
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid 365
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care, 370
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine in her mirror blue 375
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh, 380
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,

Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed 385
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame; —
O, need I tell that passion's name?

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne: — 390
'Father!' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came;
'Malcolm, was thine the blast?' the name
Less resolutely uttered fell, 395
The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Pushed her light shallop from the shore, 400
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen; —
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed, 405
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage, 410
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire, 415
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade, 420
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed, 425
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command. 430

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come 435
To yon lone isle, our desert home;

Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled, 440
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.' —
'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
'No right have I to claim, misplaced, 445
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air, 450
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!'

XXIII

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side, —
'I well believe, that ne'er before 455
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight, —
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent. 460
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt, 465

That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be
To grace a guest of fair degree; 470
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

XXIV

The stranger smiled: — 'Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come, 475
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me first the task to guide 480
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide.'
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar: 485
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break 490
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'T was all so close with copsewood bound, 495
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen, 500
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower. 505

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared, 510
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind. 515
The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green, 520
A rural portico was seen,

Aloft on native pillars borne,
 Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
 Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
 The ivy and Idæan vine, 525
 The clematis, the favored flower
 Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
 And every hardy plant could bear
 Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
 An instant in this porch she stayed, 530
 And gayly to the stranger said:
 'On heaven and on thy lady call,
 And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXVII

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
 My gentle guide, in following thee!' 535
 He crossed the threshold, — and a clang
 Of angry steel that instant rang.
 To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
 But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
 When on the floor he saw displayed, 540
 Cause of the din, a naked blade
 Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
 Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
 For all around, the walls to grace,
 Hung trophies of the fight or chase: 545
 A target there, a bugle here,
 A battle-axe, a hunting spear,
 And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
 With the tusked trophies of the boar.
 Here grins the wolf as when he died, 550

And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained, 555
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed, 560
And next the fallen weapon raised: —
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said, 565
'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand 570
As in my grasp a hazel wand:
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.' 575

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,

Whose easy step and stately port
 Had well become a princely court,
 To whom, though more than kindred knew, 580
 Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
 Meet welcome to her guest she made,
 And every courteous rite was paid
 That hospitality could claim,
 Though all unasked his birth and name. 585
 Such then the reverence to a guest,
 That fellest foe might join the feast,
 And from his deadliest foeman's door
 Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
 At length his rank the stranger names, 590
 'The Knight of Snowdown, James Fitz-James;
 Lord of a barren heritage,
 Which his brave sires, from age to age,
 By their good swords had held with toil;
 His sire had fallen in such turmoil, 595
 And he, God wot, was forced to stand
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.
 This morning with Lord Moray's train
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
 Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer, 600
 Lost his good steed, and wandered here.'

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
 The name and state of Ellen's sire.
 Well showed the elder lady's mien
 That courts and cities she had seen; 605
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed

The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
'T were strange in ruder rank to find 610
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turned all inquiry light away: — 615
'Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string, 620
'T is thus our charmed rhymes we sing.'
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.

XXXI

SONG

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking; 625
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall, 620
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;

Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking. 635

‘No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor’s clang or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark’s shrill fife may come 640
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow,
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here, 645
Here ’s no war-steed’s neigh and champing,
Shouting clans of squadrons stamping.’

XXXII

She paused, — then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong 650
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED

‘Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye, 655
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;

Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen 660
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.' 665

XXXIII

The hall was cleared, — the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed 670
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes: 675
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.
Then, — from my couch may heavenly might 680
Chase that worst phantom of the night! —
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged. 685
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,

As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view, —
O were his senses false or true? 690
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love; 695
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone, 700
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore. — 705
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all 710
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along, 715
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm; 720
The aspen slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse, —
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray! 725
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast: —
'Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy, 730
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme? 735
I'll dream no more, — by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
His midnight orisons he told, 740
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue. 745

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

I

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'T is morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay, 5
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired
Allan-bane!

II

SONG

'Not faster yonder rowers' might 10
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase 15
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

‘High place to thee in royal courts,
High place in battled line, 20
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honored meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear, 25
And lost in love’s and friendship’s smile
Be memory of the lonely isle!

III

SONG CONTINUED

‘But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh, 30
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer’s woe;
Remember then thy hap erewhile, 35
A stranger in the lonely isle.

‘Or if on life’s uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain 40
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle.’ 45

IV

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 The shallop reached the mainland side,
 And ere his onward way he took,
 The stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach 50
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree,
 As wasted, gray, and worn as he.
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to heaven, 55
 As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seemed watching the awakening fire;
 So still he sat as those who wait 60
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
 So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair;
 So still, as life itself were fled
 In the last sound his harp had sped. 65

V

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Ellen sat and smiled. —
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vexed spaniel from the beach 70
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
 Why deepened on her cheek the rose? —

Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see 75
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy 80
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellèn marked him not;
But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made; 85
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell 90
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts, — the maid, unconscious still,
Watched him wind slowly round the hill; 95
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid, —
'Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!'
'T was thus upbraiding conscience said, —
'Not so had Malcolm idly hung 100
On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strained his eye

Another step than thine to spy.' —
 'Wake, Allan-bane,' aloud she cried
 To the old minstrel by her side,— 105
 'Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name:
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme!'

Scarce from her lip the word had rushed, 110
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed;
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII

The minstrel waked his harp, — three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes, 115
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 'Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,'
 Claspings his withered hands, he said,
 'Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain, 120
 Though all unwont to bid in vain.
 Alas! than mine a mightier hand
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
 I touch the chords of joy, but low
 And mournful answer notes of woe; 125
 And the proud march which victors tread
 Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
 O, well for me, if mine alone
 That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
 If, as my tuneful fathers said, 130
 This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,

Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII

'But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
The eve thy sainted mother died; 135
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call, 140
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven. —
O! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo, 145
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow, 150
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!'

IX

Soothing she answered him: 'Assuage,
Mine honored friend, the fears of age; 155
All melodies to thee are known
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,

From Tweed to Spey — what marvel, then,
 At times unbidden notes should rise, 160
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song? —
 Small ground is now for boding fear;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here. 165
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resigned
 Than yonder oak might give the wind;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave, 170
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me' — she stooped, and, looking round,
 Plucked a blue harebell from the ground, —
 'For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days, 175
 This little flower that loves the lea
 May well my simple emblem be;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows;
 And when I place it in my hair, 180
 Allan, a bard is bound to swear
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair.'
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway, 185
 Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
 With such a look as hermits throw,

When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
 He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied: 190
 'Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honors, thou has lost!
 O, might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
 To see my favorite's step advance 195
 The lightest in the courtly dance,
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!' 200

XI

'Fair dreams are these,' the maiden cried, —
 Light was her accent, yet she sighed, —
 'Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;
 Nor would my footstep spring more gay 205
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye, — 210
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay 215
 A Lennox foray — for a day.' —

XII

The ancient bard her glee repressed:
‘Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e’er, and smiled? 220
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand 225
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give — ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say! —
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer, 230
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand; 235
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear; 240
And though to Roderick thou ’rt so dear
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion’s mane.’ — 245

XIII

‘Minstrel,’ the maid replied, and high
Her father’s soul glanced from her eye,
‘My debts to Roderick’s house I know:
All that a mother could bestow
To Lady Margaret’s care I owe, 250
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o’er her sister’s child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland’s king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed; 255
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life, — but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan’s cell; 260
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world’s cold charity,
Where ne’er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne’er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove, 265
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV

‘Thou shak’st, good friend, thy tresses gray, —
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own? — I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn’s thundering wave; 270
And generous, — save vindictive mood
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,

As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel 275
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind, 280
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought
I honor, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red 285
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky. 290
While yet a child, — and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe, —
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear 295
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear. 300
To change such odious theme were best, —
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?' —

XV

‘What think I of him? — woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father’s battle-brand, of yore 305
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur’s bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footsteps of a secret foe. 310
If courtly spy hath harbored here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What of this island, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine’s last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray 315
What yet may jealous Roderick say? —
Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme; 320
Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
Smoulders in Roderick’s breast the feud:
Beware! — But hark! what songs are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake, 325
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;
Still is the canna’s hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard —
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar.’ 330

XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle, 335
Steered full upon the lone isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine. 340
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise, 345
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow 350
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII

Ever, as on they bore, more loud 355
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,

And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed every harsher note away, 360
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
Those thrilling sounds that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when 365
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on, 370
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;
And groaning pause, ere yet again, 375
Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest — all were there. 380
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill 385
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain

Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud a hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise. 390
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burden bore,
 In such wild cadence as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless trees.
 The chorus first could Allan know, 395
 'Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!'
 And near, and nearer as they rowed,
 Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX

BOAT SONG

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine! 400
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon and broadly to grow, 405
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back again,
 'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

 Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade; 410
 When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the
 mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.

Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow; 415
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XX

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied; 420
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe; 425
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine! 430
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow! 435
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepest glen,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XXI

With all her joyful female band
 Had Lady Margaret sought the strand. 440
 Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
 And high their snowy arms they threw,
 As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
 And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
 While, prompt to please, with mother's art, 445
 The darling passion of his heart,
 The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
 To greet her kinsman ere he land:
 'Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
 And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?' 450
 Reluctantly and slow, the maid
 The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
 And when a distant bugle rung,
 In the mid-path aside she sprung: —
 'List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast 455
 I hear my father's signal blast.
 Be ours,' she cried, 'the skiff to guide,
 And waft him from the mountain-side.'
 Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
 She darted to her shallop light, 460
 And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
 For her dear form, his mother's band,
 The islet far behind her lay,
 And she had landed in the bay.

XXII

Some feelings are to mortals given 465
 With less of earth in them than heaven;

And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek, 470
'T is that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped, 475
Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear — affection's proof —
Still held a graceful youth aloof; 480
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed, 485
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said: 490
'Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I 'll tell thee: — he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud, 495

While many a minstrel answered loud,
 When Percy's Norman pennon, won
 In bloody field, before me shone,
 And twice ten knights, the least a name
 As mighty as yon Chief may claim, 500
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
 Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
 Though the waned crescent owned my might,
 And in my train trooped lord and knight, 505
 Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true 510
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.
 Forgive, my friend, a father's boast, —
 O, it out-beggars all I lost!'

XXIV

Delightful praise! — like summer rose,
 That brighter in the dew-drop glows, 515
 The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
 For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
 The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
 The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
 The loved caresses of the maid 520
 The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
 And, at her whistle, on her hand
 The falcon took his favorite stand,
 Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,

Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly. 525
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail 530
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme. 535
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye 540
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow, 545
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind 550
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;

It danced as lightsome in his breast
As played the feather on his crest. 555
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown, 560
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, 'O my sire!' did Ellen say, 565
'Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late returned? And why' —
The rest was in her speaking eye.
'My child, the chase I follow far,
'T is mimicry of noble war; 570
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade;
Nor strayed I safe, for all around 575
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued; 580
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.

Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me again.'

XXVII

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came, 585
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day; 590
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head; 595
Yet was the evening banquet made
Ere he assembled round the flame
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then cast around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground, 600
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said: —

XXVIII

'Short be my speech; — nor time affords, 605
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father, — if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honored mother; — Ellen, — why,

My cousin, turn away thine eye? — 610
And Græme, in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land, —
List all! — The King's vindictive pride 615
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
And when the banquet they prepared, 620
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide, 625
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known, 630
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green, 635
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show.'

XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye, 640
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,
But from his glance it well appeared 645
'T was but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
'Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er; 650
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command, 655
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek apart 660
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er,' —

XXX

'No, by mine honor,' Roderick said, 665
'So help me Heaven, and my good blade!

No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
 My father's ancient crest and mine,
 If from its shade in danger part
 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart! 670
 Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
 To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
 To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
 Will friends and allies flock enow;
 Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief, 675
 Will bind to us each Western Chief.
 When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
 The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
 The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
 And when I light the nuptial torch, 680
 A thousand villages in flames
 Shall scare the slumbers of King James! —
 Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
 And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
 I meant not all my heat might say. — 685
 Small need of inroad or of fight,
 When the sage Douglas may unite
 Each mountain clan in friendly band,
 To guard the passes of their land,
 Till the foiled King from pathless glen 690
 Shall bootless turn him home again.'

XXXI

There are who have, at midnight hour,
 In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
 And, on the verge that beetled o'er
 The ocean tide's incessant roar, 695

Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around, 700
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale; —
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel, 705
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow? —
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed, 710
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye, 715
And eager rose to speak, — but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood, 720
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
'Roderick, enough! enough!' he cried,

'My daughter cannot be thy bride; 725
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be, — forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er 730
Will level a rebellious spear.
'T was I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy; 735
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!'

XXXIII

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode; 740
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night, 745
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way;
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung, 750
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.

The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope, 755
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob — so mute were all —
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look, 760
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps the Græme.

XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke —
As flashes flame through sable smoke, 765
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid 770
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
'Back, beardless boy!' he sternly said,
'Back, minion! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid, 775
Thank thou for punishment delayed.'
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
'Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!' 780
Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,

And death had been — but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength: — ‘Chieftains, forego! 785
 I hold the first who strikes my foe. —
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
 What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
 His daughter’s hand is deemed the spoil
 Of such dishonorable broil?’ 790
 Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced and blade half bared.

XXXV

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung, 795
 Margaret on Roderick’s mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen’s scream,
 As faltered through terrific dream,
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veiled his wrath in scornful word: 800
 ‘Rest safe till morning; pity ’t were
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
 Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
 Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
 Nor lackey with his freeborn clan 805
 The pageant pomp of earthly man.
 More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
 Thou canst our strength and passes show. —
 Malise, what-ho!’ — his henchman came:
 ‘Give our safe-conduct to the Græme.’ 810
 Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:
 ‘Fear nothing for thy favorite hold;

The spot an angel deigned to grace
 Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
 Thy churlish courtesy for those 815
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight as in blaze of day,
 Though with his boldest at his back
 Even Roderick Dhu beset the track. — 820
 Brave Douglas, — lovely Ellen, — nay,
 Naught here of parting will I say.
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
 So secret but we meet again. —
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,' — 825
 He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand —
 Such was the Douglas's command —
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn, 830
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
 Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.
 Much were the peril to the Græme
 From those who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 't were safest land, 835
 Himself would row him to the strand.
 He gave his counsel to the wind,
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
 Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
 His ample plaid in tightened fold, 840
 And stripped his limbs to such array
 As best might suit the watery way, —

XXXVII

Then spoke abrupt: 'Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!'
The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed, — 845
'O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade. 850
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honored Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare, — 855
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.'
Then plunged he in the flashing tide. 860
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave, 865
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell. 870
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

I

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be! 5
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless
course.

Yet live there still who can remember well, 10
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound, 15
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

II

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue; 20
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain shadows on her breast 25
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright; 30
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The gray mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky 35
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace and rest and love. 40

III

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid 45
His hand on his impatient blade.

Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught 50
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast; —
Such glance the mountain eagle threw, 55
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake. 60

IV

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood, 65
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore. 70
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest, 75

But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 't was said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er. 80
The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
The eager huntsman knew his bound, 85
And in mid chase called off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien. 90

V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
His mother watched a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of men
In some forgotten battle slain, 95
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand
Which once could burst an iron band; 100
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;

There the slow blindworm left his slime 105
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
For heath-bell with her purple bloom
Supplied the bonnet and the plume. 110
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade:
She said no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair 115
The virgin snood did Alice wear;
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite, 120
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy, 125
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail, 130
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,

To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate, 135
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;
 In vain the learning of the age
 Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind. 140
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells,
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride;
 Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung, 145
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the spectre's child. 150
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till from their foam his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the river Demon rise:
 The mountain mist took form and limb 155
 Of noontide hag or goblin grim;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swelled with the voices of the dead;
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death: 160
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.

One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim 165
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
Of charging steeds, careering fast 170
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;
The thunderbolt had split the pine, —
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show 175
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII

'T was all prepared; — and from the rock
A goat, the patriarch of the flock, 180
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb, 185
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew, 190
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave

Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross thus formed he held on high, 195
 With wasted hand and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke: —

IX

'Woe to the clansman who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew, 200
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low!
 Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust, 205
 But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and woe.'
 He paused; — the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look, 210
 On high their naked brands they shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook;
 And first in murmur low,
 Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source, 215
 And flings to shore his mustered force,
 Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,
 'Woe to the traitor, woe!'
 Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew, 220

The exulting eagle screamed afar, —
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his muttered spell:
Dismal and low its accents came, 225
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd 230
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud: —
'Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear, 235
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame, 240
And infamy and woe.'
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goshawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill 245
Of curses stammered slow;
Answering with imprecation dread,
'Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed

That e'er shall hide the houseless head 250
We doom to want and woe!
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the gray pass where birches wave
On Beala-nam-bo. 255

XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread, 260
And deadlier, on the clansman's head
Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
He quenched among the bubbling blood, 265
And, as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
'When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed! 270
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's blood drench his hearth! 275
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,

Bought by this sign to all beside!’
He ceased; no echo gave again 280
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII

Then Roderick with impatient look
From Brian’s hand the symbol took:
‘Speed, Malise, speed!’ he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave. 285
‘The muster-place be Lanrick mead —
Instant the time — speed, Malise, speed!’
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew:
High stood the henchman on the prow; 290
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill; 295
And from the silver beach’s side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand

XIII

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer’s hide 300
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend ’gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest; 305

With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook'like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep, 310
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career! 315
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed 320
Are in thy course — speed, Malise, speed!

XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down. 325
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamor and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand, 330
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;
The herds without a keeper strayed,

The plough was in mid-furrow stayed, 335
The falconer tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray 340
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep, 345
The lark's blithe carol from the cloud
Seems for the scene too gayly loud.

XV

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen, 350
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayst thou rest, thy labor done,
Their lord shall speed the signal on. —
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way. 355
What woful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase, 360
At Roderick's side shall fill his place! —
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,

Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear. 365
 His stripling son stands mournful by,
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
 The village maids and matrons round
 The dismal coronach resound.

XVI

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain, 370
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font, reappearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow, 375
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper 380
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest. 385

Fleet foot on the correi,
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,

How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain, 390
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!

XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed, 395
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'T is not a mourner's muffled tread, 400
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste or deadly fear
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast: — unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall; 405
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!'

XVIII

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line, 410
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony, 415

Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu, —
‘Alas!’ she sobbed, — ‘and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan’s son!’
One look he cast upon the bier, 420
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his laboring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed, 425
He vanished, and o’er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow’s tear
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman’s eye 430
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
‘Kinsman,’ she said, ‘his race is run
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen, — the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan’s shelter now. 435
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan’s God will guard my son. —
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan’s hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan’s head! 440
Let babes and women wail the dead.’
Then weapon-clang and martial call
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand; 445
And short and flitting energy

Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force; 450
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew; 455
The tear that gathered in his eye
He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
That graced the sable strath with green, 460
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye, 465
He dashed amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice, — the foam splashed high, 470
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fallen, — forever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife, 475

Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX

A blithesome routh that morning-tide
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave 480
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude but glad procession came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame; 485
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied 490
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step and bashful hand
She held the kerchief's snowy band. 495
The gallant bridegroom by her side
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI

Who meets them at the churchyard gate? 500
The messenger of fear and fate!

Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood, 505
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
‘The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!’
And must he change so soon the hand 510
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide 515
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom! — it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine’s cause, her Chieftain’s trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race, — away! away! 520

XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And lingering eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look, 525
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced till on the heath
Where Lubnaig’s lake supplies the Teith. —
What in the racer’s bosom stirred?
The sickening pang of hope deferred, 530

And memory with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers 535
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honors on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast. 540
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve and feeling strong
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII

The heath this night must be my bed, 545
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid, 550
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow, 555
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,

His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary. 560

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered foes, 565
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze, 570
Rushing in conflagration strong
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far, 575
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course; 580
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the gray sire, whose trembling hand 585
Could hardly buckle on his brand,

To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,
 Mustered its little horde of men, 590
 That met as torrents from the height
 In Highland dales their streams unite,
 Still gathering, as they pour along,
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
 Till at the rendezvous they stood 595
 By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
 Each trained to arms since life began,
 Owning no tie but to his clan,
 No oath but by his chieftain's hand,
 No law but Roderick Dhu's command. 600

XXV

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
 Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
 And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
 To view the frontiers of Menteith.
 All backward came with news of truce; 605
 Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
 In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch Con; 610
 All seemed at peace. — Now wot ye why
 The Chieftain with such anxious eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,
 This western frontier scanned with care? —
 In Benvenue's most darksome cleft, 615

A fair though cruel pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell. 620
By many a bard in Celtic tongue
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.

XXVI

It was a wild and strange retreat, 625
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock 630
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch with mingled shade 635
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity. 640
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,

With dashing hollow voice, that spoke 645
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs with hideous sway
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young; 650
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Gray Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort, 655
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong, 660
When Roderick with a chosen few
Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin Cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;
The prompt retainers speed before, 665
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the Chief in musing mind, 670
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord;

The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake. 675
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighboring height,
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man, 680
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand, 685
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII

Their Chief with step reluctant still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode. 690
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand, 695
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove, —
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost; 700
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,

Still fondly strains his anxious ear
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze 705
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,
 That wakes its measure slow and high,
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy. 710
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'T is Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
 Listen to a maiden's prayer!
 Thou canst hear though from the wild, 715
 Thou canst save amid despair.
 Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
 Though banished, outcast, and reviled —
 Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
 Mother, hear a suppliant child! 720
Ave Maria!
Ave Maria! undefiled!
 The flinty couch we now must share
 Shall seem with down of eider piled,
 If thy protection hover there.
 The murky cavern's heavy air 725
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
 Mother, list a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air, 730

From this their wonted haunt exiled,

Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care,

Beneath thy guidance reconciled:

Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer, 735

And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX

Died on the harp the closing hymn, —

Unmoved in attitude and limb,

As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord

Stood leaning on his heavy sword, 740

Until the page with humble sign

Twice pointed to the sun's decline.

Then while his plaid he round him cast,

'It is the last time — 't is the last,'

He muttered thrice, — 'the last time e'er 745

That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!'

It was a goading thought, — his stride

Hied hastier down the mountain-side;

Sullen he flung him in the boat,

An instant 'cross the lake it shot. 750

They landed in that silvery bay,

And eastward held their hasty way,

Till, with the latest beams of light,

The band arrived on Lanrick height,

Where mustered in the vale below 755

Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI

A various scene the clansmen made:
Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to rest upon the ground, 760
Scarce to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade 765
Or lance's point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide, 770
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign. 775

CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

I

'THE rose is fairest when 't is budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears, 5
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!'
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung, 10
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood
A wakeful sentinel he stood. 15
Hark! — on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
'Stand, or thou diest! — What, Malise? — soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.

By thy keen step and glance I know, 20
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.' —
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone. —
'Where sleeps the Chief?' the henchman said.
'Apart, in yonder misty glade; 25
To his lone couch I 'll be your guide.' —
Then called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened bow, —
'Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track 30
Keep eagle watch till I come back.'

III

Together up the pass they sped.
'What of the foeman?' Norman said. —
'Varying reports from near and far;
This certain, — that a band of war 35
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune;
King James the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud 40
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?' — 45
'What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,

And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge, 50
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?' —

IV

'T is well advised, — the Chieftain's plan 55
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?'
'It is because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried, 60
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew,' — 65

MALISE

'Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery spark; 70
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road, 75

And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dennan's Row
 A child might scathless stroke his brow.'

V

NORMAN

'That bull was slain; his reeking hide
 They stretched the cataract beside, 80
 Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
 Couched on a shelf beneath its brink, 85
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream. 90
 Nor distant rests the Chief; — but hush!
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost, 95
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?'

MALISE

'Peace! peace! to other than to me 100
 Thy words were evil augury;

But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell. 105
The Chieftain joins him, see — and now
Together they descend the brow.'

VI

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word: —
'Roderick! it is a fearful strife, 110
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance, — 115
'T is hard for such to view, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn, 120
This for my Chieftain have I borne! —
The shapes that sought my fearful couch
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man — save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead, 125
Is gifted beyond nature's law —
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll, 130

But borne and branded in my soul: —
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'

VII

'Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair. 135
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
 A spy has sought my land this morn, — 140
 No eve shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdock, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside, 145
 Till in deep path or dingle brown
 He light on those shall bring him down. —
 But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?'

VIII

'At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive 150
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And marked the sable pale of Mar.'
 'By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes. 155
 When move they on?' 'To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune.'

‘Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place, — say, couldst thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn? 160
Strengthened by them, we well might bide
The battle on Benledi’s side.
Thou couldst not? — well! Clan-Alpine’s men
Shall man the Trosachs’ shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine’s gorge we’ll fight, 165
All in our maids’ and matrons’ sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,
Lover for maid beloved! — But why —
Is it the breeze affects mine eye? 170
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through 175
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
’Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
Each to his post! — all know their charge.’
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance, 180
Obedient to the Chieftain’s glance. —
I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX

Where is the Douglas? — he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the gray stone 185
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,

While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are poured on her unheeding ear.
 'He will return — dear lady, trust! —
 With joy return; — he will — he must. 190
 Well was it time to seek afar
 Some refuge from impending war,
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cowed by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats with many a light, 195
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north;
 I marked at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moored by the lone islet's side, 200
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care 205
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?'

X

ELLEN

'No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave, 210
 The tear that glistened in his eye
 Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,

Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke, 215
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden when the theme
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream 220
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
O no! 't was apprehensive thought
For the kind youth, — for Roderick too — 225
Let me be just — that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
"If not on earth, we meet in heaven!" 230
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie and make me known?
Alas, he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friends' safety with his own; 235
He goes to do — what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!

XI

'Nay, lovely Ellen! — dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane 240
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme, —

Heaven's blessing on his gallant name! —
 My visioned sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.

245

When did my gifted dream beguile?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow
 That presaged this approaching woe!

Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.

250

Would we had left this dismal spot!
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
 Of such a wondrous tale I know —

Dear lady, change that look of woe,
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.'

255

ELLEN

'Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear.'
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

260

XII

BALLAD

ALICE BRAND

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis and merle are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter's horn is ringing.

‘O Alice Brand, my native land 265
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

‘O Alice, ’t was all for thy locks so bright,
And ’t was all for thine eyes so blue, 270
That on the night of our luckless flight
Thy brother bold I slew.

‘Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed, 275
And stakes to fence our cave.

‘And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.’ 280

‘O Richard! if my brother died,
’T was but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

‘If pall and vair no more I wear, 285
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we ’ll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest-green.

‘And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land, 290

Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.'

XIII

BALLAD CONTINUED

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood;
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side, 295
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who woned within the hill, —
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill. 300

'Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear 305
The fairies' fatal green?

'Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban. 310

'Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.'

XIV

BALLAD CONTINUED

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood, 315
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands, 320
And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
'That is made with bloody hands.'

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear, — 325
'And if there 's blood upon his hand,
'T is but the blood of deer.'

'Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood, 330
The blood of Ethert Brand.'

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign, —
'And if there 's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine. 335

'And I conjure thee, demon elf,
By Him whom demons fear,

To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?’

XV

BALLAD CONTINUED

‘T is merry, ’t is merry, in Fairy-land, 340
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

‘And gayly shines the Fairy-land —
But all is glistening show, 345
Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

‘And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem, 350
And now like dwarf and ape.

‘It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And ’twixt life and death was snatched away 355
To the joyless Elfin bower.

‘But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine.’ 360

She crossed him once — she crossed him twice —
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold; 365
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing, 370
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien, 375
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims —
'T is Snowdown's Knight, 't is James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream: 380
'O stranger! in such hour of fear
What evil hap has brought thee here?'
'An evil hap how can it be
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide 385
Met me betimes this morning-tide,
And marshalled over bank and bourne

The happy path of my return.'
 'The happy path! — what! said he naught
 Of war, of battle to be fought, 390
 Of guarded pass?' 'No, by my faith!
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe.'
 'O haste thee, Allan, to the kern:
 Yonder his tartans I discern;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure 395
 That he will guide the stranger sure! —
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed, by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here.' 400

XVII

'Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath
 When love or honor's weighed with death.
 Then let me profit by my chance, 405
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war. 410
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower —'
 'O hush, Sir Knight! 't were female art, 415
 To say I do not read thy heart;

Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track; 420
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on! —
One way remains — I 'll tell him all —
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame, 425
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first — my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 't were infamy to wed. 430
Still wouldst thou speak? — then hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth —
If yet he is! — exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity —
Thou hast the secret of my heart; 435
Forgive, be generous, and depart!'

XVIII

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye, 440
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony, 445

As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered to attend her side, 450
As brother would a sister guide.
'O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn
If thou may'st trust yon wily kern.' 455
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
He paused, and turned, and came again. 460

XIX

'Hear, lady, yet a parting word! —
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave, 465
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield, 470
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand — the ring is thine;

Each guard and usher knows the sign. 475
Seek thou the King without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way:
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me.'
He placed the golden circlet on, 480
Paused — kissed her hand — and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown, 485
Across the stream they took their way
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high — 490
'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?' —
He stammered forth, 'I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.'
He looked — he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed: 'Ah! gallant gray! 495
For thee — for me, perchance — 't were well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell. —
Murdoch, move first — but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!'
Jealous and sullen on they fared, 500
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm, 505
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy. 510
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought, 515
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shrieked till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew; 520
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung —
She sung! — the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strained and roughened, still 525
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII

SONG

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warped and wrung —
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue. 530
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'T was thus my hair they bade me braid, 535
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile
That drowned in blood the morning smile! 540
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII

'Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle gray, 545
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.'
''T is Blanche of Devan,' Murdoch said,
'A crazed and captive Lowland maid,

Ta'en on the morn she was a bride, 550
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge. — 555
Hence, brain-sick fool!' — He raised his bow: —
'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!'
'Thanks, champion, thanks!' the Maniac cried, 560
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
'See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume! 565
No! — deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
Wave forth a banner fair and free, 570
Meet signal for their revelry.'

XXIV

'Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!'
'O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green; 575
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

‘For O, my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche’s heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue, 580
And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

‘It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise and guessest well.’
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on. 585
Still on the Clansman fearfully
She fixed her apprehensive eye,
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o’er the glen.

XXV

‘The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set, — 590
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

‘It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily; 595
He came stately down the glen, —
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

‘It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below, 600
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

‘He had an eye, and he could heed, —
Ever sing warily, warily;

He had a foot, and he could speed, —
 Hunters watch so narrowly.'

605

XXVI

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
 When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
 But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
 And Blanche's song conviction brought.
 Not like a stag that spies the snare, 610
 But lion of the hunt aware,
 He waved at once his blade on high,
 'Disclose thy treachery, or die!'
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
 But in his race his bow he drew. 615
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
 And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast. —
 Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
 For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind, 620
 The fierce avenger is behind!
 Fate judges of the rapid strife —
 The forfeit death — the prize is life;
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,
 Close couched upon the heathery moor; 625
 Them couldst thou reach! — it may not be —
 Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
 The fiery Saxon gains on thee! —
 Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
 As lightning strikes the pine to dust; 630
 With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
 Ere he can win his blade again.

Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way, 635
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed; 640
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried, —
'Stranger, it is in vain!' she cried.
'This hour of death has given me more 645
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye 650
That thou wert my avenger born.
Seest thou this tress? — O, still I 've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine, 655
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 't was shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head, —
My brain would turn! — but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave, 660
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,

And thou wilt bring it me again.
 I waver still. — O God! more bright
 Let reason beam her parting light! —
 O, by thy knighthood's honored sign, 665
 And for thy life preserved by mine,
 When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom, 670
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong! —
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell.'

XXVIII

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James; 675
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims;
 And now, with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murdered maid expire.
 'God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!' 680
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
 And placed it on his bonnet-side:
 'By Him whose word is truth, I swear, 685
 No other favor will I wear,
 Till this sad token I imbrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu! —
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
 The chase is up, — but they shall know, 690

The stag at bay's a dangerous foe.'
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back. 695
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er: —
'Of all my rash adventures past, 700
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune? — 705
Like bloodhounds now they search me out, —
Hark, to the whistle and the shout! —
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I'll couch me here till evening gray, 710
Then darkling try my dangerous way.'

XXIX

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell; 715
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.

With cautious step and ear awake, 720
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice there
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold. 725
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned. 730

XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand, —
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'
'A stranger.' 'What dost thou require?' 735
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?' 'No.'
'Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?' 740
'I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.'
'Bold words! — but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend, 745
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?

Thus treacherous scouts, — yet sure they lie,
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!' — 750
'They do, by heaven! — come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest.'
'If by the blaze I mark aright, 755
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight.'
'Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe.'
'Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare.' 760

XXXI

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest, 765
Then thus his further speech addressed: —
'Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honor spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke; 770
Yet more, — upon thy fate, 't is said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn, —
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand, 775
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,

Will I depart from honor's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name; 780
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward, 785
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.'
'I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 't is nobly given!' 790
'Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby.'
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side, 795
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

I

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side, — 5
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the
brow of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen, 10
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by, 15
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,

And, true to promise, led the way, 20
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path! — they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith, 25
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'T was oft so steep, the foot was fain 30
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew, —
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear! 35

III

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on, 40
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak, 45
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,

It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still, 50
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand. 55
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few, 60
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

'Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,' the Saxon said,
'I dreamt not now to claim its aid. 65
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar, 70
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied.'
'Yet why a second venture try?'
'A warrior thou, and ask me why! — 75
Moves our free course by such fixed cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?

Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide 80
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide, —
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone.' 85

V

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
'No, by my word; — of bands prepared 90
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.' 95
'Free be they flung! for we were loath
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung! — as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, stranger, peaceful since you came, 100
Bewildered in the mountain-game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu, 105
Save as an outlawed desperate man,

The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
Yet this alone might from his part 110
Sever each true and loyal heart.'

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
'And heardst thou why he drew his blade? 115
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given, 120
If it were in the court of heaven.'
'Still was it outrage; — yet, 't is true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command, 125
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life! —
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain 130
His herds and harvest reared in vain, —
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile: 135
‘Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green, 140
With gentle slopes and groves between: —
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land. 145
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o’er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry, 150
And well the mountain might reply, —
“To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.” 155
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think’st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul! — While on yon plain 160
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river’s maze, —

The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share. 165
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought, 170
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?'
'As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true, — 175
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid, —
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy, 180
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.'
'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow. 185
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow, 190
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower

Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!' 195

IX

'Have then thy wish!' — He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose 200
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart, 205
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen 210
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still. 215
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung, 220
Upon the mountain-side they hung.

The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: 'How say'st thou now? 225
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu!

X

Fitz-James was brave: — though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air, 230
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before: —
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.' 235
Sir Roderick marked, — and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood — then waved his hand: 240
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low; 245
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair, —
The next but swept a lone hill-side, 250

Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack, —
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone. 255

XI

Fitz-James looked round, — yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed, 260
And to his look the Chief replied:
'Fear naught — nay, that I need not say —
But — doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford: 265
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on; — I only meant 270
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.'
They moved; — I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive, 275
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,

Which yet by fearful proof was rife 280
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground, 285
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind 290
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear. 295

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines 300
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid, 305
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.

This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan, 310
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand, 315
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

XIII

The Saxon paused: 'I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade; 320
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can naught but blood our feud atone? 325
Are there no means?' — 'No, stranger, none!
And hear, — to fire thy flagging zeal, —
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead: 330
"Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife."
'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
'The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff, — 335
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;

Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe, 340
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand 345
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:
'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu? 350
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate; —
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? — By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light 355
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair.'
'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word! 360
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone! —
Yet think not that by thee alone, 365
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;

Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast. 370
 But fear not — doubt not — which thou wilt —
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each looks to sun and stream and plain 375
 As what they ne'er might see again;
 Then foot and point and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw, 380
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dashed aside;
 For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
 He practised every pass and ward, 385
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintained unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,
 And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood; 390
 No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
 Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And showered his blows like wintry rain;
 And, as firm rock or castle-roof 395

Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand, 400
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!'
'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy! 405
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.'
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung; 410
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round. —
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel 415
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast; 420
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!

But hate and fury ill supplied 425
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game:
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye 430
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close, 435
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhopèd, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last; 440
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid, —
'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valor give.'
With that he blew a bugle note, 445
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet; 450
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead

By loosened rein a saddled steed;
 Each onward held his headlong course, 455
 And by Fitz-James reined up his horse, —
 With wonder viewed the bloody spot, —
 'Exclaim not, gallants! question not. —
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight; 460
 Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight;
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed. 465
 The sun rides high; — I must be boune
 To see the archer-game at noon;
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea. —
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

'Stand, Bayard, stand!' — the steed obeyed, 470
 With arching neck and bended head,
 And glancing eye and quivering ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid, 475
 But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
 And lightly bounded from the plain,
 Turned on the horse his armed heel,
 And stirred his courage with the steel.
 Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480
 The rider sat erect and fair,
 Then like a bolt from steel crossbow

Forth launched, along the plain they go.
 They dashed that rapid torrent through,
 And up Carhonie's hill they flew; 485
 Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
 His merry men followed as they might.
 Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
 And in the race they mock thy tide;
 Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490
 And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
 They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
 They sink in distant woodland soon;
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
 They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre; 495
 They mark just glance and disappear
 The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
 They bathe their courser's sweltering sides,
 Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
 And on the opposing shore take ground, 500
 With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
 Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
 And soon the bulwark of the North,
 Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,
 Upon their fleet career looked down. 505

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
 Sudden his steed the leader reined;
 A signal to his squire he flung,
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung: —
 'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray, 510
 Who townward holds the rocky way,

Of stature tall and poor array?
 Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
 With which he scales the mountain-side?
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?' 515
 'No, by my word; — a burly groom
 He seems, who in the field or chase
 A baron's train would nobly grace —'
 'Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
 And jealousy, no sharper eye? 520
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.
 'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle! 525
 The uncle of the banished Earl.
 Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe:
 The King must stand upon his guard;
 Douglas and he must meet prepared.' 530
 Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
 They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
 Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf, 535
 Held sad communion with himself: —
 'Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
 A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel. 540

I, only I, can ward their fate, —
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven; —
Be pardoned one repining tear! 545
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent! — but that is by,
And now my business is — to die. —
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled; 550
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand, —
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb 555
Prepare — for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet! 560
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show, 565
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park, 570
And play my prize; — King James shall mark

If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

XXI

The Castle gates were open flung, 575
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went, 580
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame, 585
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain, —
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire, 590
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims, —
'Long live the Commons' King, King James!'
Behind the King thronged peer and knight, 595
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern; 600

There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower, 605
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout. 610
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band, —
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl, 615
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill. 620
The Douglas bent a bow of might, —
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain,
From the King's hand must Douglas take 625
A silver dart, the archers' stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy, —
No kind emotion made reply!

Indifferent as to archer wight, 630
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes, — 635
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came. —
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King 640
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed; 645
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone 650
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past, 655
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang. 660
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now with anxious wonder scan, 665
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.
The old men marked and shook the head, 670
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land. 675
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd, 680
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind; 685
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and in the field

Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown, 690
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down, 695
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra, — whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North, — 700
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank. 705
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn, 710
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed, 715
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;

They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.

His stifled wrath is brimming high, 720

In darkened brow and flashing eye;

As waves before the bark divide,

The crowd gave way before his stride;

Needs but a buffet and no more,

The groom lies senseless in his gore. 725 .

Such blow no other hand could deal,

Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamored loud the royal train,

And brandished swords and staves amain,

But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back! 730

Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!

Beware the Douglas. — Yes! behold,

King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,

And vainly sought for near and far,

A victim to atone the war, 735

A willing victim, now attends,

Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.' —

'Thus is my clemency repaid?

Presumptuous Lord!' the Monarch said:

'Of thy misproud ambitious clan, 740

Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,

The only man, in whom a foe

My woman-mercy would not know;

But shall a Monarch's presence brook

Injurious blow and haughty look? — 745

What ho! the Captain of our Guard!

Give the offender fitting ward. —
Break off the sports!' — for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows, —
'Break off the sports!' he said and frowned, 750
'And bid our horsemen clear the ground.'

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud; 755
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep 760
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw 765
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said:
'Sir John of Hyndford, 't was my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then 770
A word with these misguided men. —

XXVIII

'Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.

My life, my honor, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws. 775
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low, 780
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour, 785
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red:
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son,
For me that widow's mate expires, 790
For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!' 795

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
Who for his country felt alone, 800
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life

Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy, 805
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head, 810
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honored charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart, 815
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
'O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim 820
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas sway; 825
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream, 830
And fickle as a changeful dream;

Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,
 O, who would wish to be thy king? — 835

XXXI

'But soft! what messenger of speed
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
 I guess his cognizance afar —
 What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
 'He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound 840
 Within the safe and guarded ground;
 For some foul purpose yet unknown, —
 Most sure for evil to the throne, —
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summoned his rebellious crew; 845
 'T is said, in James of Bothwell's aid
 These loose banditti stand arrayed.
 The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
 To break their muster marched, and soon
 Your Grace will hear of battle fought; 850
 But earnestly the Earl besought,
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII

'Thou warn'st me I have done amiss, —
 I should have earlier looked to this; 855
 I lost it in this bustling day. —
 Retrace with speed thy former way;
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,

The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar, 860
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws. 865
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!' 870
He turned his steed, — 'My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.'
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned. 875

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the saddened town 880
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumored feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms; — the Douglas too, 885
They mourned him pent within the hold,
'Where stout Earl William was of old.' —

And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade. 890
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun, 895
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

I

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance, 5
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe, 10
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail, 15
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble
wail.

II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang, 20
While drums with rolling note foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air, 25
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar, 30
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown, 35
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labored still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands, 40
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim 45
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;

Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which thy loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace; 50
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;
The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the laborer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name; 55
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield; 60
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV

They held debate of bloody fray, 65
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near, 70
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard, —
Sad burden to the ruffian joke, 75

And savage oath by fury spoke! —
 At length up started John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer, 80
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew
 When deed of danger was to do.
 He grieved that day their games cut short,
 And marred the dicer's brawling sport, 85
 And shouted loud, 'Renew the bowl!
 And, while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear.'

V

SOLDIER'S SONG

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule 90
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
 And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar! 95

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker, 100
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches,—and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 't is right of his office poor laymen to lurch
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church. 105
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI

The warder's challenge, heard without,
Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went, — 110
'Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And — beat for jubilee the drum! —
A maid and minstrel with him come.'
Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,
Was entering now the Court of Guard, 115
A harper with him, and, in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
'What news?' they roared: — 'I only know, 120
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untamable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast.' — 125
'But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!

Get thee an ape, and trudge the land, 130
The leader of a juggler band.'

VII

'No, comrade; — no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl, 135
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.' —
'Hear ye his boast?' cried John of Brent, 140
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
'Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be, 145
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee.'
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife; 150
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen: —
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed, 155
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII

Boldly she spoke: 'Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend, 160
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong.'
Answered De Brent, most forward still 165
In every feat or good or ill:
'I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause. 170
Poor Rose, — if Rose be living now,' —
He wiped his iron eye and brow, —
'Must bear such age, I think, as thou. —
Hear ye, my mates! I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall: 175
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough; 180
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.'

IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young, —
Of Tullibardine's house he sprung, —
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humor light, 185

And, though by courtesy controlled,
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
 The high-born maiden ill could brook
 The scanning of his curious look
 And dauntless eye: — and yet, in sooth, 190
 Young Lewis was a generous youth;
 But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
 Ill suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range. 195
 'Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
 Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
 On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
 Like errant damosel of yore?
 Does thy high quest a knight require, 200
 Or may the venture suit a squire?'
 Her dark eye flashed; — she paused and sighed: —
 'O what have I to do with pride! —
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father's life, 205
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.'

X

The signet-ring young Lewis took 210
 With deep respect and altered look,
 And said: 'This ring our duties own;
 And pardon, if to worth unknown,

In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed. 215
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey 220
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.'
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared 225
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold: — 230
'Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war, 235
Where gayer crests may keep afar.'
With thanks — 't was all she could — the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent: — 240
'My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!

His minstrel I, — to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires 245
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir, 250
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse — 255
A doleful tribute! — o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right, — deny it not!
'Little we reck,' said John of Brent,
'We Southern men, of long descent; 260
Nor wot we how a name — a word —
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part, —
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer 265
More than to guide the laboring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.'

XII

Then, from a rusted iron hook, 270
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,

Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din; 275
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint and crushing limb,
By artists formed who deemed it shame 280
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
And made the bar unhasp its hold. 285
They entered: — 't was a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture 290
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
Such as the rugged days of old
Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
'Here,' said De Brent, 'thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again. 295
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well.'
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growled anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed 300
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew —

Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
 For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
 They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought. 305

XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
 Shall never stem the billows more,
 Deserted by her gallant band,
 Amid the breakers lies astrand, —
 So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu! 310
 And oft his fevered limbs he threw
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides
 Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
 Yet cannot heave her from her seat; — 315
 O, how unlike her course at sea!
 Or his free step on hill and lea! —
 Soon as the Minstrel he could scan, —
 ‘What of thy lady? — of my clan? —
 My mother? — Douglas? — tell me all! 320
 Have they been ruined in my fall?
 Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
 Yet speak, — speak boldly, — do not fear.’ —
 For Allan, who his mood well knew,
 Was choked with grief and terror too. — 325
 ‘Who fought? — who fled? — Old man, be brief; —
 Some might, — for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live? — who bravely died?’
 ‘O, calm thee, Chief!’ the Minstrel cried,
 ‘Ellen is safe!’ ‘For that thank Heaven!’ 330

‘And hopes are for the Douglas given; —
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan, — on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold. 335
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.’

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever’s fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks 340
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
‘Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle, — again where ne’er
Shall harper play or warrior hear! — 345
That stirring air that peals on high,
O’er Dermid’s race our victory. —
Strike it! — and then, — for well thou canst, —
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight, 350
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I’ll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men, 355
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.’
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed, —

Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight 360
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awakened the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along; —
 As shallop launched on river's tide, 365
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

'The minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue, 370
 For ere he parted he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray —
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand! —
 There is no breeze upon the fern, 375
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still, 380
 So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread, 385
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance 390
 The sun's retiring beams? —
 I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far! 395
 To hero bouné for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array!

XVI

'Their light-armed archers far and near 400
 Surveyed the tangled ground,
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
 A twilight forest frowned,
 Their barded horsemen in the rear
 The stern battalia crowned. 405
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum;
 Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake, 410
 Or wave their flags abroad;

Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe, 415
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow. 420
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen, 425
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

'At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell! 430
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply —
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry, 435
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,

Pursuers and pursued; 440
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood? —
 "Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances down!
 Bear back both friend and foe!" — 445
 Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levelled low;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide. — 450
 "We' ll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel crows the game!
 They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We 'll drive them back as tame."

XVIII

'Bearing before them in their course 455
 The relics of the archer force,
 Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
 Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
 Above the tide, each broadsword bright
 Was brandishing like beam of light, 460
 Each targe was dark below;
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's wing,
 They hurled them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash, 465
 As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,

As if a hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank, — 470
 “My banner-man, advance!
I see,” he cried, “their column shake.
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance!” —
The horsemen dashed among the rout, 475
 As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —
 Where, where was Roderick then! 480
One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was poured;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear, 485
 Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in, 490
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

'Now westward rolls the battle's din, 495
That deep and doubling pass within. —
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle. 500
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set; — the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue 505
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge, 510
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll 515
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes — the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North 520
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.

At weary bay each shattered band, 525
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day. 530

XX

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: "Behold yon isle! —
See! none are left to guard its strand 535
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'T is there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile; —
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er, 540
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we 'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung, 545
He plunged him in the wave: —
All saw the deed, — the purpose knew,
And to their clamors Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer, 550
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'T was then, as by the outcry riven,

Poured down at once the lowering heaven:
A whirlwind swept Lock Katrine's breast, 555
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael. 560
In vain. — He nears the isle — and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame, 565
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand: —
It darkened, — but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan; —
Another flash! — the spearman floats 570
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI

“Revenge! revenge!” the Saxons cried,
The Gael's exulting shout replied. 575
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag 580
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side

Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
 While, in the Monarch's name, afar
 A herald's voice forbade the war, 585
 For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold —
 Were both, he said, in captive hold.' —
 But here the lay made sudden stand,
 The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy 590
 How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand kept feeble time;
 That motion ceased, — yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song; 595
 At length, no more his deafened ear
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp, — his hands are clenched,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye 600
 Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
 Thus, motionless and moanless, drew
 His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu! —
 Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit passed; 605
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII

LAMENT

'And art thou cold and lowly laid,
 Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,

Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade! 610
For thee shall none a requiem say? —
For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine, 615
I' ll wail for Alpine's honored Pine!

'What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done, 620
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
O, woe for Alpine's honored pine! 625

'Sad was thy lot on mortal stage! —
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again, 630
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored Pine.'

XXIII

Ellen the while, with bursting heart, 635
Remained in lordly bower apart,

Where played, with many-colored gleams
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall, 640
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, 't was but to say, 645
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared, 650
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made, 655
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they 're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,
The window seeks with cautious tread. 660
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour?
'T was from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

'My hawk is tired of perch and hood, 665
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green, 670
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that 's the life is meet for me.

'I hate to learn the ebb of time
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl, 675
Inch after inch, along the wall.

The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me. 680

'No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet, 685
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee, —
That life is lost to love and me!'

XXV

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The listener had not turned her head, 690
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdown's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain. 695
'O welcome, brave Fitz-James!' she said;
'How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt —' 'O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give, 700
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside. 705
Come, Ellen, come! 't is more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime.'
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear, 710
And gently whispered hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till at his touch its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide. 715

XXVI

Within 't was brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even, 720
And from their tissue fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised, 725
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate! —
She gazed on many a princely port
Might well have ruled a royal court; 730
On many a splendid garb she gazed, —
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare; and in the room
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent, 735
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring, —
And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King! 740

XXVII

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,

And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands, — 745
She showed the ring, — she clasped her hands.
O, not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her, — and, the while,
Checked with a glance the circle's smile; 750
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed: —
'Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring; 755
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask naught for Douglas; — yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong. 760
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern 765
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our throne. —
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow? 770
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.'

XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour, 775
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power, —
When it can say with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry; 780
He stepped between — 'Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 't is my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray 785
In life's more low but happier way,
'T is under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils, — for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-James. 790
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.'
Then, in a tone apart and low, —
'Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought, 795
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!' 800
Aloud he spoke: 'Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,

Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring, —
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?'

XXIX

Full well the conscious maiden guessed	805
He probed the weakness of her breast;	
But with that consciousness there came	
A lightening of her fears for Græme,	
And more she deemed the Monarch's ire	
Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire	810
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;	
And, to her generous feeling true,	
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.	
'Forbear thy suit; — the King of kings	
Alone can stay life's parting wings.	815
I know his heart, I know his hand,	
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand: —	
My fairest earldom would I give	
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live! —	
Hast thou no other boon to crave?	820
No other captive friend to save?'	
Blushing, she turned her from the King,	
And to the Douglas gave the ring,	
As if she wished her sire to speak	
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.	825
'Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,	
And stubborn justice holds her course.	
Malcolm, come forth!' — and, at the word,	
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.	
'For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,	830
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,	

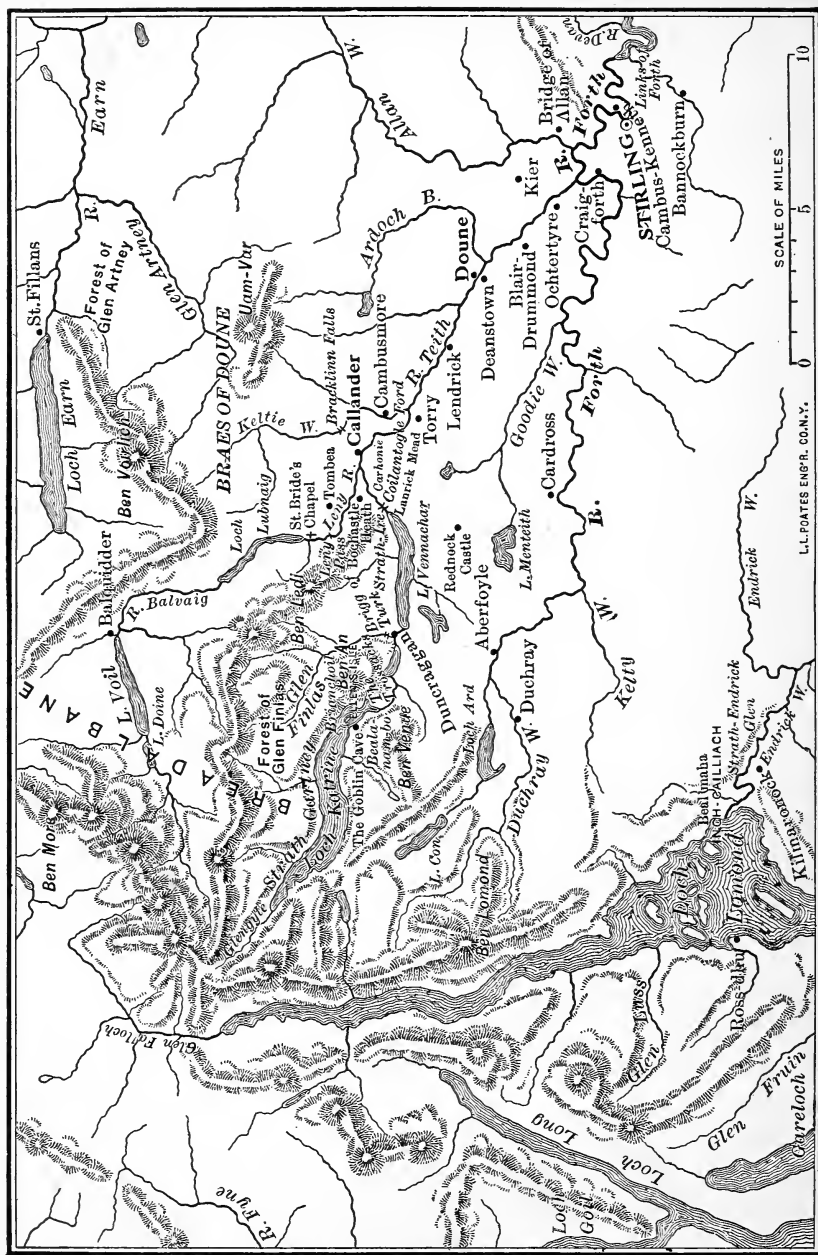
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man, 835
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name. —
Fetters and warder for the Græme!
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band, 840
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending. 845
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee. 850

Yet once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way, 855
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone. —
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire, 860
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'T is now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'T is now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell; 865
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell —
And now, 't is silent all! — Enchantress, fare thee well!

NOTES



LOCH KATRINE AND VICINITY

NOTES

CANTO FIRST

35, 1. Harp of the North. A reference to Scottish minstrelsy. Each canto is introduced by one or more Spenserian stanzas. In these first three stanzas, which serve as an introduction to the whole poem, Scott addresses Scottish minstrelsy after the manner of the Greek and Latin poets, whose poems began with invocations to the Muses. He expresses regret that minstrelsy and the story-telling art of the gleemen have disappeared from Scotland.

2. Saint Fillan's spring. St. Fillan, a Scotch abbot of the seventh century; he is said to have been a favorite saint of Robert Bruce.

3. Numbers. Verses.

10. Caledon. Caledonia, Scotland.

36, 29. Monan. No definite location is known.

31. Glenartney. A glen or valley in Perthshire. It will be found interesting to trace on the map the chase in the 'Trossachs' region.

33. Benvoirlich. A mountain on the southern side of Lake Earn. *Ben* is a Gaelic word for *mountain*.

37, 51. With one brave bound the copse he cleared. A poetical arrangement of poetical words.—**Brave.** Splendid, fine.—**Copse.** Coppice.

53. Uam-Var. A mountain in Callander.

66. Falcon. What is the pronunciation?—**Cairn.** Literally a heap of stones; here poetical for *crag* or *peak*.

68. Ken. Sight.

38, 89. Menteith. The district through which the river Teith flows.

93. Lochard or Aberfoyle. Loch Ard is a small lake near the town of Aberfoyle. Consult the map.

95. Loch Achray. A small lake between Loch Katrine and Loch Vennachar.

97. Benvenue. A very high mountain near Loch Katrine. Cf. l. 33.

39, 103. Cambusmore. Situated on Keltie Water, a few miles southeast of Callander.

105. **Benledi.** On the north side of Loch Vennachar. The name means *hill of God*.

106. **Bochastle.** A plain between the Teith and the stream that flows out of Loch Vennachar.

120. **Black Saint Hubert's breed.** Black hounds, thought to be particularly acceptable to St. Hubert, the patron saint of hunting.

123. **All but won.** Very nearly won.

127. **Quarry.** The hunted animal; a technical term.

40, 138. **Whinyard.** A short sword, a cutlass.

145. **Trosachs.** *Trossachs* (the more modern spelling) means literally *country*, the Scottish or Gaelic name applied to the valley lying between Lochs Achray and Katrine. At the present time one of the delightful coaching trips on the British Isles is made through this territory.

41, 166. **Woe worth the chase, etc.** What is the grammatical construction here?

174. **Dingle.** Meaning?

180. **Hied.** Hastened.

42, 196. **Huge as the tower.** Tower of Babel; *Genesis*, XI, 1-9.

201. **Minaret.** A slender tower on a Mohammedan mosque or temple.

202. **Pagod.** Pagoda.

43, 229. **Athwart.** Crosswise.

45, 274. **Wildering.** Perplexing, bewildering.

285. **Cloister.** Convent.

293. **Matins.** Morning prayers.

297. **Bead.** The old Anglo-Saxon word meaning *prayer*.

46, 302. **Beshrew.** Curse.

313. **Highland plunderers.** The clans who inhabited the regions around Loch Katrine were, up to a late period, in the habit of plundering and pillaging their Lowland neighbors. It was considered not only lawful, but honorable, for hostile tribes to plunder one another.

318. **Falchion.** A sword.

47, 344. **A Naiad or a Grace.** The Naiads were the nymphs of the fountains, lakes, and rivers, i.e., water nymphs. The Graces were the attendants to Venus and were three in number, characterizing grace, beauty, and joy.

48, 363. **Snood.** A ribbon used by the Scottish maidens in binding the hair. At marriage it was exchanged for the coif.

51, 438. **A couch was pulled for you.** The materials of the couch, broken and fragrant heather, were pulled.

440. **Ptarmigan.** A kind of quail which is brown in summer, but turns white, or nearly so, in winter.

443. **Rood.** Cross, crucifix.

458. **Old Allan-bane foretold.** A reference to the superstitions of the old Scotch, who believed implicitly in the poems of divination.

464. **Lincoln green.** A hunting cloth made in Lincoln.
- 52, 475. **Errant-knight.** A knight wandering in search of adventure.
478. **Emprise.** Enterprize.
- 53, 504. **For retreat,** etc. "The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually in the most retired spot of their domain some place of retreat for the hour of necessity which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and secluded situation." — SCOTT.
- 54, 525. **Idæan vine.** A reference to Mt. Ida near the ancient city of Troy, famous for its vines.
546. **Target.** A shield.
- 55, 573. **Ferragus or Ascabart.** Two giants who figure in medieval romance.
- 56, 580. **Though more than kindred knew.** Though "a mother's due" was more than kinship warranted.
591. **Fitz-James.** *Fitz* from Latin *filius*, meaning *son*.
596. **God wot.** God knew.
- 57, 619. **Spells.** Enchantments produced by magical formulae.
- 58, 638. **Pibroch.** A highland air played upon bagpipes.
641. **Fallow.** Unplowed land.
642. **Bittern.** A waterfowl.
657. **Reveill .** The morning signal for soldiers to get up.
- 61, 729. **Exiled race.** The Douglasses were hated thoroughly by the young King James V because of the Earl of Angus who, having married the mother of James V, had sought to make himself the virtual ruler of Scotland.
738. **Orisons.** Prayers.

CANTO SECOND

- 62, 7. **A minstrel gray.** "The minstrel was a necessary family officer retained until a late period by Highland chieftains."
- 63, 29. **Plaided.** The characteristic costume of the Scottish Highlanders.
- 66, 109. **Gr eme.** The powerful and ancient family of Graham. "The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which for metrical reasons is here spelt after the Scottish pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Sterling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in Scottish annals. Sir John Gr eme, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labor and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realized his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And notwithstanding the severity of his

temper and the rigor with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as the third, John Græme, of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death, in the arms of victory, may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the nonconformists, during the reigns of Charles II and James II." — SCOTT.

131. **Erst.** Formerly. — **Saint Modan.** A Scotch abbot of the seventh century. There is no proof that he had particular musical proficiency.

68, 166. **Native virtue great.** Ellen's father is great in the fact that misfortune and banishment cannot overwhelm him.

170. **Reave.** Tear away.

69, 200. **Lady of the Bleeding Heart.** The bleeding heart was the emblem of the Douglas family, so that now Ellen may be identified as a member of that family. Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, had married Margaret Tudor, mother of James V. When young, the king had been held in such subjection that he hated the very name of Douglas, and, having escaped from their power, he banished every one of them.

206. **Strathspey.** A Highland dance.

216. **Lennox foray.** A raid into the Lennox country, i.e., the territory belonging to the Lennox family, which borders the lower end of Loch Lomond.

70, 220. **Black Sir Roderick.** "Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt or Arsaces to those of Parthia. This name was usually a patronymic expressive of his descent from the founder of the family. Besides this title, which belonged to his office and dignity, the chieftain had usually another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as *dhu* or *roy*; sometimes from size, as *beg* or *more*; at other times from some peculiar exploit or from some peculiarity of habit or appearance. Roderick Dhu, therefore, signifies Black Roderick." — SCOTT.

221. **Holy-Rood.** The royal palace at Edinburgh.

230. **Disowned by every noble peer.** "The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate that, numerous as their allies were and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote part of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise. James Douglas, son of the banished Earl of Angus, afterwards well known by the title of

Earl of Morton, lurked, during the exile of his family, in the north of Scotland under the assumed name of James Innes, otherwise James the Grieve (i.e., Reve or Bailiff). 'And as he bore the name,' says Godscroft, 'so did he also execute the office of a grieve or overseer of the lands and rents, the corn and cattle of him with whom he lived.' From the habits of frugality and observation which he acquired in his humble situation, the historian traces the intimate acquaintance with popular character which enabled him to rise so high in the state, and that honorable economy by which he repaired and established the shattered estates of Angus and Morton." — SCOTT.

235. **Guerdon.** Reward.

236. **Dispensation.** Roderick could not marry his cousin Ellen without a dispensation, or special permission, from the Pope.

71, 254. **Shrouds.** Protects.

260. **Votaress.** A woman devoted to any particular service or work. — **Maronnan.** At the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, in the parish Kilmoronock, is a small cell or chapel dedicated to St. Maronnan. Ellen will become a nun before she will marry Roderick.

270. **Bracklinn.** A mountain cataract near the village of Calander.

73, 303. **Tine-man.** "Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises that he acquired the epithet of *Tine-man*, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought." — SCOTT.

308. **Hotspur's bows.** Douglas formed an alliance with the English bowmen under Percy, or Hotspur. The reference is to the alliance of Scotch spearmen and English bowmen. The story of the rebellion has been told by Shakespeare in his *Henry IV*.

319. **Beltane game.** May-day festivities.

330. **Pibroch.** Cf. Canto I, 638.

74, 335. **Glengyle.** The glen, or valley, at the western extremity of Loch Katrine.

337. **Brianchoil.** A point on the southern side of the lake.

343. **Tartans brave.** Showy plaids.

345. **Bonnets.** The Scotch cap worn by men.

351. **Chanters.** The tubes of the bagpipe.

75, 362. **Gathering.** The war cry or gathering word of the clan; the slogan.

373. **Mimic din.** The din of battle imitated by the bagpipes.

76, 392. **With measured sweep,** etc. The rowers sang the chorus (burden) so that the rowing and the singing kept time, the strokes of the oar marking the beats in the rhythm of the song.

405. **Bourgeon.** To bud, sprout.

408. **Roderigh Vich Alpine.** Cf. Canto II, 220. Black Roderick of the family of Alpine. *Dhu* in Gaelic is *black*; *Vich* is *son of*.

410. **Beltane.** Whitsuntide, the festival held on the first day of May. Cf. Canto III, 319.

77, 416. **Menteith, Breadalbane.** Districts north of Loch Lomond.

80, 497. **Percy's Norman pennon.** Captured by the Douglas in a raid.

504. **Waned crescent.** The cognizance of the house of Buccleuch, which had endeavored to set the king free from the Douglasses. The failure to accomplish this accounts for the waning crescent. Cf. Canto V, 838.

506. **Blantyre.** A priory near Bothwell Castle.

81, 525. **Unhooded.** Falcons were kept with their heads hooded, the uncovering of their heads being the signal for flight.

527. **Goddess of the wood.** Diana.

541. **Ptarmigan.** Cf. Canto I, 440.

82, 574. **Glenfinlas.** A wooded valley east of Ben-an.

83, 583. **Strath-Endrick glen.** A valley watered by the Endrick, which flows into Loch Lomond.

606. **Glozing.** Glossing over.

84, 616. **Tamed the Border-side.** "In 1529 James made a convention at Edinburgh for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers who, during the license of his minority and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances." — SCOTT.

James scoured Ettrick Forest and put to death many of the leaders of the bandits, particularly one Johnnie Armstrong who came out to meet him.

623-626. **Meggat, Yarrow,** etc. Streams flowing into the Tweed.

638. **Streight.** Difficulty, emergency.

86, 678. **Links of Forth.** The vale of Forth below Stirling. *Links* refers to the windings of a river.

684. **Signs.** What were the signs?

87, 708. **Astound.** Astounded.

718. **Hectic.** Habitual.

88, 747. **Nighted.** Benighted.

89, 757. **Checkered shroud.** His tartan plaid.

90, 804. **Fell.** A moor.

805. **Nor lackey with his freeborn clan.** Roderick will not win the king's favor by serving him as lackey or footman.

809. **Henchman.** "This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready upon all occasions to venture his life in defense of his master; and at drinking bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from which his title is derived, and watches the conversation to see if any one offends his patron." — SCOTT.

CANTO THIRD

93, 18. Fiery Cross. "When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Cream Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbors, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745-1746, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours." — SCOTT.

94, 39. Cushat dove. Ring dove, wood pigeon.

46. Impatient blade. The quality belonging to the owner is, by a kind of personification, transferred to the blade itself.

95, 62. Rowan. Mountain ash.

71. That monk, etc. "The state of religion in the Middle Ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck." — SCOTT.

74. Benharrow. A mountain near Loch Lomond.

96, 76. Druid. The Druids were priests of the Celtic inhabitants of Britain. They worshiped in forests, regarding the oak and the mistletoe as sacred, and offered human sacrifices.

87. Strath. A valley of some size through which a river runs. A *strath* is to be distinguished from a *glen*, a narrow valley through which a small stream flows.

99. Knot-grass. A kind of weedy grass.

104. Fieldfare. A thrush.

98, 138. Sable-lettered page. Black lettered, because old English manuscripts were written in heavy-faced type.

142. **Cabala.** An interpretation of the Scriptures by the method of finding concealed meanings.

154. **River Demon.** "The river demon, or river horse, for it is that form which he commonly assumes, is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil and malicious spirit, delighting to forebode and to witness calamity." — SCOTT.

99, 168. **Ben-Shie.** "Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelary, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity and intimidated by its wailings any approaching disaster. Ben-Shie implies a female fairy, whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families." — SCOTT.

169. **Sounds, too, had come.** "A presage of the kind alluded to in the text is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity. How easily the eye as well as the ear may be deceived upon such occasions, is evident from the stories of armies in the air and other spectral phenomena with which history abounds." — SCOTT.

171. **Shingly.** Pebbly.

189. **Cubit's length.** The measure of the length of the forearm.

191. **Inch-Cailliach.** Isle of Old Women, or Isle of Nuns, a beautiful island in the southeastern portion of Loch Lomond, containing the clan burying ground.

100, 198. **Anathema.** A curse of the church.

200. **Sepulchral yew.** The yew is called *sepulchral* from its somber character, which has led to its use in graveyards.

212. **Strook.** Struck.

101, 243. **Goshawk.** A slender brown hawk.

102, 253. **Coir-Uri skin.** A pass on the northern side of Ben-venue.

255. **Beala-nam-bo,** "or the pass of cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Coir-nan-Uri skin." — SCOTT.

103, 286. **Lanrick mead.** The mead or meadow on the north side of Loch Vennachar.

297. **Three fathom.** How wide would this be?

104, 310. **Scaur.** Cliff.

105, 344. **Bosky.** Woody, bushy.

349. **Duncraggan.** A farm or hamlet between Achray and Vennachar.

106, 369. **Coronach.** Funeral song. "The Coronach of the Highlanders was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words

of it were articulate, they expressed the praises of the deceased, and the loss the clan would sustain by his death." — SCOTT.

386. **Correi.** The hollow side of a hill, the side where game usually lies.

387. **Cumber.** Trouble, perplexity.

107, 394. **Stumah.** Meaning *faithful* when applied to a dog; cf. *Fido*.

108, 439. **Hest.** Behest.

445. **Targe.** Target, shield.

109, 453. **Strath-Ire.** The valley above Loch Lubnaig, watered by the Teith in its upper reaches.

461. **The chapel of Saint Bride.** Scott says that this chapel stood on a small and romantic knoll in the middle of the valley called Strath-Ire.

110, 485. **Coif-clad.** The Scottish maiden at her marriage exchanged the snood for the coif.

112, 546. **Bracken.** Large ferns.

113, 570. **Balquidder.** The braes of Balquidder stretch westward from the head of Strath-Ire. — **The midnight blaze.** The heath on Scottish moorlands is often set fire to, so that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage. — SCOTT.

577. **Coil.** Bustle, confusion, tumult. As *Hamlet* III, i, 68, "When we have shuffled off this mortal coil."

580. **Balvaig.** A river flowing from Lochs Voil and Doine. Vocative case.

582. **Strath-Gartney.** A broad valley on the northern side of Loch Katrine. Trace the route of the Cross of Fire, showing that it has made a complete circuit of Clan Alpine's lands, having been brought back to Loch Katrine, from which it started, after traveling a distance of between forty and fifty miles.

114, 606. **Græme, Bruce.** Illustrious Scottish families.

607-609. **Rednock, Cardross, Duchray.** Scottish castles.

610. **Lech Con.** "Lake of the dogs," two miles south of Loch Katrine.

115, 622. **Coir-nan-Uriskin.** See Canto III, 253. The den of the Urisk or Highland satyr, a steep and romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue.

633. **Incumbent.** Overhanging.

118, 713. **Ave Maria!** Hail Mary! This begins the Roman Catholic prayer to the Virgin Mary.

CANTO FOURTH

121, 5. **Wilding.** Wild.

10. **Conceit.** Fancy.

19. **Braes of Doune.** Hills on the north side of the Teith.

122, 36. **Boune.** Prepared.

123, 63. **Taghairm**. "The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm* mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall or at the bottom of a precipice or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation he revolved in his mind the question proposed, and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits who haunt the desolate recesses." — SCOTT.

73. **Kerns**. Foot soldiers of the lowest rank. The heavy armed soldiers were called gallow-glasses, as in *Macbeth*, I, ii,

"From the western isles
Of kerns and gallow-glasses is supplied."

74. **Beal'maha**. "The pass of the plain," east of Loch Lomond.

124, 77. **Dennan's Row**. The point at which the ascent to Loch Lomond commences.

82. **Boss**. Protuberance; a knob, projection.

84. **Hero's Targe**. This rock is in the woods of Glenfinlas.

98. **Broke**. Cut up, quartered. "Everything belonging to the chase was matter of solemnity among our ancestors; but nothing was more so than the mode of cutting up, or, as it was technically called, *breaking* the slaughtered stag. The forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also." — SCOTT.

126, 150. **Doune**. The castle of Doune, an ancient stronghold of the Earls of Menteith, situated on the left bank of the Teith, midway between Stirling and Callander. — **Glaive**. A sword. Latin *gladius*.

153. **Pale**. A heraldic term applied to a band or stripe extending from the top to the bottom of a shield.

157. **Boune**. Ready.

127, 160. **Earn**. District of Loch Earn.

174. **Stance**. Foundation.

186. **Fast by**. Close to. Cf. *Paradise Lost* I, ii.

128, 198. **Red Streamers of the north**. The northern lights or the Aurora Borealis.

129, 217. **Rife**. Plentiful.

223. **Trowed**. Believed.

231. **Cambus-kenneth's fane**. *Fane* is another word for *temple*. This was an abbey, now in ruins, about a mile east of Stirling.

130, 262. **Mavis and Merle**. Thrush and blackbird.

131, 267. **Wold**. Open country.

277. **Vest of pall**. Mantle of rich material. How do we get the modern meaning of *pall*?

283. **Darkling.** In the dark.

285. **Vair.** The fur of a small animal much resembling a squirrel, worn by ladies of rank.

132, 298. **Woned.** Lived, dwelt.

306. **Fatal green.** "As the Daoine Shi', or Men of Peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offense when any mortals ventured to assume their favorite color. Indeed, from some reason, which has been, perhaps, originally a general superstition, *green* is held in Scotland to be unlucky to particular tribes and counties. . . . More especially is it held fatal to the whole clan of Graham." — SCOTT.

308. **Christened man.** "The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction." — SCOTT.

133, 330. **Kindly.** Kindred.

134, 358. **Durst sign.** Dare make the sign of the cross.

135, 371. **Dunfermline.** A town on the Firth of Forth not far from Edinburgh, the residence of the early kings of Scotland.

387. **Bourne.** Boundary.

136, 392. **Augur scathe.** Foretell harm.

398. **Serf.** Dependant.

138, 446. **As death.** As if death.

471. **Lordship the embattled field.** His estate, or domain, was the battlefield.

473. **Reck of.** Care for.

139, 477. **Signet.** Signet ring.

140, 506. **Weeds.** Clothing, garments. What is the modern usage for this word in this sense?

141, 531-532. **Allan, Devan.** Two rivers of Perthshire.

142, 567. **Batten.** Fatten.

143, 590-605. The **hunters** are Clan-Alpine's men, Roderick Dhu and his followers. The **stag of ten** is Fitz-James, for whom the snares are laid, and the **wounded doe** is Blanche herself.

145, 642. **Daggled.** Wet, drenched.

657. **Shred.** Torn off.

146, 680. **Wreak.** Avenge.

686. **Favor.** A gift to a knight from his lady, such as a scarf or ribbon.

687. **Imbrue.** Drench.

148, 721. **Threads the brake.** Feels his way cautiously and with difficulty through the brake.

722. **Not the summer solstice there.** The meaning is that in summer at the greatest heat these regions have cold nights. The solstice is that point in the ecliptic, or sun's apparent course, at which the sun is farthest from the equator and appears to stand

still (Latin *sol* and *sto*). The summer solstice is reached on the twenty-first of June; the winter solstice on the twenty-second of December.

734. **Saxon.** The Highlanders called the Lowlanders *Shas-gunach* or *Sassenach*, that is, Saxons. The name *Saxon* is of doubtful etymology, being variously derived from (1) the *saks* or *sax*, their characteristic weapon; (2) the *Sacae*, a Scythian tribe (Dr. Danaldson); (3) *Sexe*, seaman or pirates (Dr. Guest); (4) Old German *sass*; Anglo-Saxon *saet*, an inhabitant, or settler (Adelung).

746. **Slip.** Let loose upon the game.

150, 787. **Coilantogle's ford.** A ford near the western extremity of Loch Vennachar, across the stream which flows from that lake.

788. **Thy warrant is thy sword.** Having passed the ford, the knight must depend upon his sword, as he would come within the territory loyal to the Scottish king and therefore could depend no further upon the Highland chief.

794. **Wreath.** Applied here to a heap of heather.

CANTO FIFTH

151, 10. **Sheen.** Bright. Now used as a noun, meaning *brightness* or *splendor*, but in Old English *scheene*, *schene*, or *sheen* (bright, fair) was used as an adjective.

"A Cristofer on his brest of silver schene."
Chaucer, *Prologue to Canterbury Tales*, 115.

18. **Gael.** The Highlander is called *Gael*, and the Lowlander, as before, *Saxon*. Cf. Canto IV, 734.

152, 43. **Hardihood.** Having firmness. (Shakéspeare's word is *hardiment*; Chaucer's is *hardynesse*.)

46. **Shingles.** Gravel.

153, 51. **Osiers.** Willow trees.

155, 108. **Regent.** John Stuart, Duke of Albany, was regent during the minority of James V. He was not strong enough to keep the realm in peace.

112. **Arraignment.** Accusation.

124. **Albany.** "There is scarcely a more disorderly period of Scottish history than that which succeeded the Battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed." — SCOTT.

125. **Truncheon.** Scepter.

126. **Mewed.** Inexperienced.

157, 169. **Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.** "So far, indeed, was a *Creagh*, or foray, from being held disgraceful, that a

young chief was always expected to show his talents for command, so soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighboring sept, for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the Saxons or Lowlanders, for which no apology was necessary. The Gaels, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowland had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach." — SCOTT.

158, 198. **Wild as the scream of the curlew.** *Wild* is an adverb modifying *flew*. The curlew is a water bird named for its cry.

160, 253. **Jack.** A padded leather coat of armor worn by peasants.

273. **Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.** "This incident, like some other passages in the poem illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy." — SCOTT.

161, 298. **Three mighty lakes.** Katrine, Achray, and Vennachar.

301. **Bochastle.** "The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and, indeed, on the plain itself, are some intrenchments which have been thought Roman." — SCOTT.

302-3. **Rome . . . her eagle wings unfurled.** The Romans had held the island of Britain before the coming of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The eagle was the principal standard of the Roman army.

163, 356. **Carpet knight.** "A knight who has won his title by favoritism in the drawing-room and has not known service in the field."

364. **Ruth.** Pity.

164, 380. **His targe he threw.** "A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the incumbered soldier." — SCOTT.

383. **Abroad.** Probably in France, where swordsmanship is a great art.

166, 435. **Close.** Grapple.

167, 461. **Palfrey.** A lady's saddle horse.

168, 490-497. **Torry, Lendrick, etc.** All these places are on the banks of the Teith.

169, 525. **'T is James of Douglas.** When Douglas of Kilspindie returned from exile to throw himself on the clemency of his former pupil, King James, he was recognized in a similar way by the king. "As James returned from hunting in the park at Stirling, he saw a person at a distance, and, turning to his nobles, exclaimed, 'Yonder is my Graysteil, Archibald of Kilspindie.'"

170, 550. **A Douglas by his sovereign bled.** William, Earl of Douglas, was slain by James II at Stirling in 1452.

551. **Fatal mound.** An eminence on the northeast of the Castle, where state criminals were executed. It was called "Head-ing Hill."

558. **Franciscan steeple.** The steeple of Grayfriars' church.

562. **Morrice-dancers.** The morrice dance was a dance of Moorish origin, in which bells and rattles were introduced.

564. **The burghers hold their sports to-day.** "Every burgh in Scotland of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play* or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow."

566. **Yeoman.** A countryman.

171, 572. **If.** Whether.

574. **His boyish wonder.** When the king was a boy, the Douglas had been his tutor in manly sports.

575. **Castle.** Stirling Castle.

584. **Jennet.** A small Spanish horse.

594. **Commons' King.** "James's ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title 'King of the Commons,' or *Rex Plebeiorum*, as Lesley has Latinized it." — SCOTT.

172, 603. **Hostage.** A person given as security for the performance of the conditions of a treaty or of stipulations of any kind. On the performance of the specified conditions, the hostage is released.

606. **Feudal power.** Under the feudal system, the lord had power to command the services of his tenants in time of war.

610. **Checkered bands.** Groups of gay dresses.

613. **Butts.** Targets.

614. **Robin Hood,** a noted English outlaw of the time of King Richard I. "The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favorite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the Sixth Parliament of Queen Mary, which ordered, under heavy penalties, that

'na manner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, Abbot of Unreason, Queen of May, nor otherwise.' But in 1561 the 'rascal multitude,' says John Knox, 'were stirred up to make a Robin Hude, whilk enormity was of many years left and damned by statute and act of Parliament; yet would they not be forbidden.' Accordingly they raised a very serious tumult, and at length made prisoners the magistrates who endeavored to suppress it, and would not release them until they extorted a formal promise that no one should be punished for his share of the disturbance."

615. **Quarterstaff.** A long and stout staff formerly used as a weapon of offense and defense.

615-618. **Friar Tuck, Old Scathelock, Maid Marian.** All companions of Robin Hood, mentioned in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

173, 630. **Archer wight.** Common archer.

637. **Larbert.** A town near Stirling.

174, 660. **Ladies' Rock.** A small hill near the Castle, from which the ladies watched the games.

176, 740. **Misproud.** With false pride. See 3 *King Henry VI*, II, v, 7. "Strengthening misproud York."

177, 747. **Ward.** Confinement under guard.

769. **Knighthood.** Knighthood was conferred by the king, or his representative, by a stroke with the flat of the sword on the candidate's shoulder.

773. **Fealty.** Loyalty.

179, 812. **Battled verge.** At the limits of the battlements.

180, 838. **Cognizance.** The distinguishing mark worn by an armed knight and sometimes by his dependents.

847. **Banditti.** Outlawed robbers.

181, 868. **Vulgar.** Common people, used by Shakespeare in this sense, in *Julius Caesar*.

887. **Earl William.** The William Douglas mentioned in l. 550 of this canto.

CANTO SIXTH

183, 3. **Caitiff.** An unfortunate or wretched man; not, in this case, in its opprobrious sense of a despicable fellow.

9. **Kind nurse of men.** Sleep.

15. **Gyve.** Fetter.

184, 23. **Loop.** Loophole for the discharge of arms.

42. **Harness.** Equipment.

185, 47. **Adventurers.** "The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them for military service by themselves and their tenants. James V seems first to have introduced, in addition to the militia furnished from these sources, the service of a small number of mercenaries,

who formed a bodyguard, called the Foot-Band. I have chosen to give them the harsh features of the mercenary soldiers of the period."

— SCOTT.

51. **Switzer.** A citizen of Switzerland.

53. **Fleming.** An inhabitant of Flanders, now a part of Belgium.

186, 81. **In host.** In the army.

87. **Troll.** Sing.

92. **Black-jack.** A pitcher made of leather.

93. **Sack.** A Spanish wine.

95. **Upsees out.** To the bottom of the tankard.

98. **Beelzebub.** In *Paradise Lost*, Beelzebub is the chief follower of Satan. Here, to be taken as the prince of devils.

187, 103. **Placket and pot.** Women and wine.

104. **Lurch.** Swindle, outwit.

111. **Ghent.** A Flemish city.

188, 131. **Juggler.** "The jongleurs, or jugglers, used to call in the aid of various assistants to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing. In Scotland these poor creatures seem, to a late period, to have been bondswomen to their masters." — SCOTT.

136. **Purvey.** Provide, furnish.

143. **Niggard.** Stingy.

189, 170. **Needwood.** A royal forest in Staffordshire, England.

183. **Tullibardine's house.** A family of Murray. The earliest title of the ducal house of Atholl was Baron Murray of Tullibardine. Tullibardine Castle is near Auchterarder in Perthshire.

190, 199. **Damosel.** A maiden. (French *demoiselle*, diminutive of *dame*, the mistress of the house. Latin *domus*.) Spenser in his *Fairy Queen* speaks of the errant damozell.

191, 234. **Barret-cap.** Helmet, or battle-cap, made of cloth. He puts the purse in his cap as a favor.

192, 261. **Wot.** Know, understand.

193, 285. **Unhasp.** Unclasp or undo.

295. **Leech.** Physician.

194, 306. **Prore.** Prow. (Latin *prora*, from *pro*, before.)

309. **Astrand.** Stranded.

327. **Some might.** Some might flee.

195, 348. **Strike it.** "It is popularly told of a famous freebooter that he composed the tune known as 'MacPherson's Rant,' while under sentence of death and played it at the gallows-tree. Some spirited words have been adapted to it by Burns." — SCOTT.

Carlyle in his *Essay on Burns* speaks of the MacPherson's Rant.

196, 369. **Battle of Beal' an Duine.** "A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the re-

markable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V." — SCOTT.

377. **Eyry.** The nest of a bird that builds in a lofty place. — **Erne.** Eagle.

197, 404. **Barded.** Armored. Used only of horses and horsemen.

405. **Battalia.** An army in battle array.

198, 414. **Vaward.** Vanward or in the vanguard. A body of men who ride in front of the main body of the army.

199, 447. **Serried.** Crowded together.

452. **Tinchel.** "A circle of sportsmen who, by surrounding a great space, and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the Tinchel." — SCOTT.

200, 483. **Refluent.** Ebbing.

202, 538. **Wont.** Were accustomed.

539. **Bonnet-pieces.** Gold coins, on which the king's head was represented with a bonnet instead of the usual crown.

545. **Casque and corselet.** Helmet and body armor.

203, 565. **Duncraggan's widowed dame.** Cf. Canto III, 428, *et seq.*

204, 602. **Thus, etc.** "Rob Roy, while on his deathbed, learned that a person with whom he was at enmity proposed to visit him. 'Raise me from my bed,' said the invalid; 'throw my plaid around me, and bring me my claymore, dirk, and pistols, — it shall never be said that a foeman saw Rob Roy MacGregor defenseless and unarmed.' His foeman entered and paid his compliments, inquiring after the health of his formidable neighbor. Rob Roy maintained a cold, haughty civility during their short conference, and so soon as he had left the house, 'Now,' he said, 'all is over — let the piper play *We Return No More*,' and he is said to have expired before the dirge was finished." — SCOTT.

205, 610. **Breadalbane.** Cf. Canto II, 416.

631. **Even she.** That is, Ellen. Cf. Canto II, 748 — 754.

206, 638. **Storied pane.** Painted windows on which were depicted historical scenes. Cf. Milton's *Il Penseroso*:

"Storied windows richly light."

207, 665. **Tired of perch and hood.** The hawk, blinded by a hood, was carried about on the hunter's wrist, usually secured by some light fastening. When the hood was removed, the falcon made his flight. Therefore the phrase means *tired of idleness*.

208, 697. **An almost orphan.** Because she is uncertain of her father's fate. Observe the use of *almost* as an attribute to *orphan*, which is here used as an adjective.

707. **At morning prime.** At earliest morning; dawn. *Prime* was literally the first hour of prayer, or 6 A.M.

209, 729. **Port.** Bearing; carriage.

740. **Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King.** "James V was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the 'King of the Commons.' For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises." — SCOTT.

741. **Wreath of snow.** A snowdrift. Cf. Canto IV, 794.

211, 782. **Proselyte.** One who is converted.

785. **When disguised I stray.** The name which James generally assumed in these wanderings was the "Gude-Man (or farmer) of Ballangiech." Scott says the two excellent comic songs, entitled "The Gaberlunzie Man," and "We'll gae nae mair a Rovin'," are said to have been founded on the success of King James's adventures when traveling in the disguise of a beggar. "The latter," Scott adds, "is perhaps the best comic ballad in any language."

789. **The name of Snowdoun.** "William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle 'Snowdoun.' Sir David Lindsay bestows the same epithet upon it."

212, 813. **Grace.** Pardon.

213, 842. **Harp of the North, farewell.** Cf. introduction of the poem, Canto I, 1—27.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR STUDY

THE NARRATIVE

1. Give the meaning of the title of the poem, describe the arrangement of the poem, and show that each canto has a fitting title.
2. Why should *The Lady of the Lake* be called a metrical romance?
3. Explain the meaning of the word *canto* and show that it has an appropriate use here.
4. Who tells the story? Would it have been more appropriate for one of the characters to tell the story?
5. What device of method has the author used to give a graceful finish to the poem?
6. How are the different characters introduced into the narrative?
7. Would the story have been as effective if it had begun with a description of the region instead of the description of the hunt?
8. Is there anything which has taken place before the opening of the poem that has to be understood for appreciation of the poem?
9. How are the previous fortunes of the Douglas family narrated?
10. Explain carefully, by definite reference to the different cantos, the poet's use of the supernatural in telling his story.
11. Point out the features of the Combat Scene which make it thoroughly dramatic.
12. How is the battle of Beal' an Duine described to the reader? Do you think this method more or less effective than the ordinary method of placing the reader as a witness of the fight?
13. What difficulty presents itself to a person about to narrate a story wholly or in part historical?
14. Is the action rapid or slow? How is it sometimes retarded?
15. Show definitely the purpose of the introductions of each canto and the songs that appear throughout the poem.
16. State the effect on you of the Clan-Alpine Boat Song and the Coronach.
17. Which is best in the poem: nature description, plot construction, character description, or the portrayal of Scottish life and customs?

SETTING

1. From Scott's introduction to the poem, tell of his method of making his geographical setting accurate.

2. From the biography, show where he got his vast store of Scotch traditions and superstitions.
3. Make a map of the section of Perthshire where the scene is laid, and show the course of the hunt, starting from Stirling.
4. What purpose do the nature descriptions serve?
5. Are the landscape scenes drawn boldly or are they given in minute detail?
6. Show whether Scott keeps closely to the actual geographical locations of his scenes.
7. Give the time and the duration of the action of the poem.
8. What have you learned concerning manners and customs of the people, their hospitality and superstitions?
9. Select several descriptions of places which seem to you particularly good.
10. Make a list of the words you have found which are especially appropriate in describing Scottish scenery.
11. What historical foundation was there for the story of James V's treatment of Douglas?
12. Do the descriptions of the supernatural seem appropriate to the story? Why?

Plot

1. Does the poem have real plot, or is it a series of episodes?
2. Show that the whole narrative depends upon a simple literary device.
3. Show, in a general way, how Scott discloses to the reader the reason for Roderick's being an outlaw, the past and present condition of Douglas, and Ellen's feeling for Malcolm.
4. What purpose of plot does the Minstrel serve?
5. How much of the plot must be explained as taking place before the actual story begins?
6. Taking each canto separately, show its purpose with regard to the plot, and note particularly in how many cantos the main action is told in a single vivid scene.

Canto First

1. What purpose does the detailed account of the chase serve in developing the plot?
2. The falling of the sword produces what atmospheric effect upon the story?
3. What key note is struck for the story in the incidents of this canto?
4. At the end of Canto First, what does the reader think the story is to be?

CANTO SECOND

1. What is brought into this canto to make the narrative more complicated?
2. What is the purpose of the scene between Ellen and Allan-bane?
3. When and where has Malcolm Græme been mentioned before? What do you learn of him?
4. Compare the introduction of Roderick Dhu into the story with that of James Fitz-James.
5. What is gained by having Douglas and Roderick Dhu return at the same time?
6. Does Ellen's reluctance to join in the welcome seem natural? Explain clearly Ellen's attitude to Rhoderick Dhu, and what claim he had on her.
7. State the various things, from the moment of his arrival, which caused Roderick Dhu to violate the laws of hospitality.
8. What events in Canto Third are foreshadowed by this canto?

CANTO THIRD

1. Give a description and history of Brian the Hermit and show how he fits into the story.
2. Where has Malise figured before this?
3. Tell the story of the Fiery Cross. What is the significance of the incidents described in the journey of Malise with the cross?
4. What is the purpose of Canto Third? Would the story be complete without it?

CANTO FOURTH

1. How does the prophecy related in the early part of this canto affect our interest?
2. How is the Taghairm related to the story of the cross and its journey?
3. Give in detail the result of Malise's journey, the news he brought, and its effect on Roderick's plan of action.
4. What is Scott's purpose in bringing in Blanche of Devan?
5. Does the ballad of Alice Brand seem out of place?
6. What is the effect of Fitz-James's arrival?
7. How is the Taghairm fulfilled?
8. What is the purpose of this canto in the development of the story?

CANTO FIFTH

1. What is the purpose of the dialogue in the early part of this canto?
2. How do the games in the latter part hasten the action?

3. Compare Roderick's grievances with those of Fitz-James.
4. With whom does the reader sympathize during the combat? Why?
5. Why did Douglas return to Stirling?
6. Why does Scott choose the incident of Lufra as the moment for Douglas's outbreak?
7. How does Fitz-James know that Douglas is Ellen's father?
8. Can you find excuse for the king's treatment of Douglas?
9. How is the interest in the story sustained?

CANTO SIXTH

1. Is the incident of the guardroom important?
2. Is the conclusion sustained and dramatic?
3. Why does the minstrel tell of the battle to Rhoderick Dhu?
4. What makes this a suitable final scene for Allan and for Roderick?

CHARACTERS

1. Show that the narrative attempts to throw into prominence two racial types.
2. Bring out in detail the contrast between Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu, citing definite episodes to prove your statements.
3. Is Roderick an attractive or a repellent character to you?
4. Do the characters seem realistically drawn; do they seem real people of actual life?
5. Does history give Scott any justification for the character of James V? For the character of the Douglas?
6. Describe Allan-bane. What was his position in the clan?
7. How is Ellen's character displayed? What attributes does Scott dwell on in his description of her?
8. After Malcolm is introduced into the story, how do you feel that he compares with the other men of the narrative?
9. Does the Douglas seem vainglorious as he speaks of his past in Canto Second?
10. How is your opinion of Douglas affected by his refusal to coerce Ellen or to fight against the king?
11. Who is Malise? What purpose does he serve?

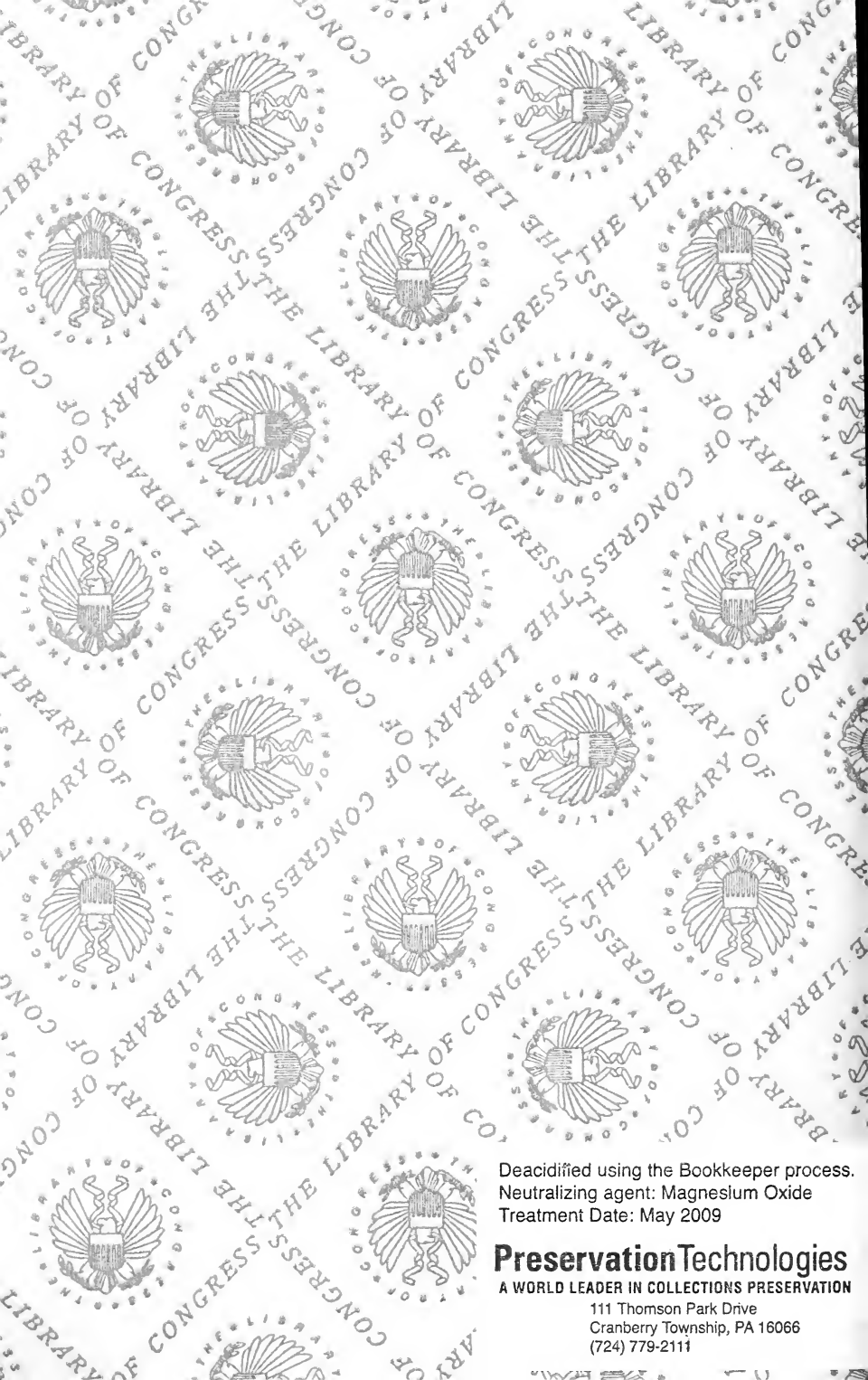
FORM

1. How does the form of the introductory stanzas differ from the form of the body of the poem?
2. Can you discover any plan in the division of the canto into stanzas?

3. What is the meter of the normal line? How many different kinds of variation to this normal line do you find?
4. What onomatopoetic words are used in Canto First?
5. What is the purpose of the meter in the Boat Song?
6. Make a list of all the songs that appear in the poem, and indicate the meter and rhyme scheme of each.
7. Do you find any difference between this narrative in poetry and a prose story of the same kind, in respect to language, thought, and expression, other than meter?





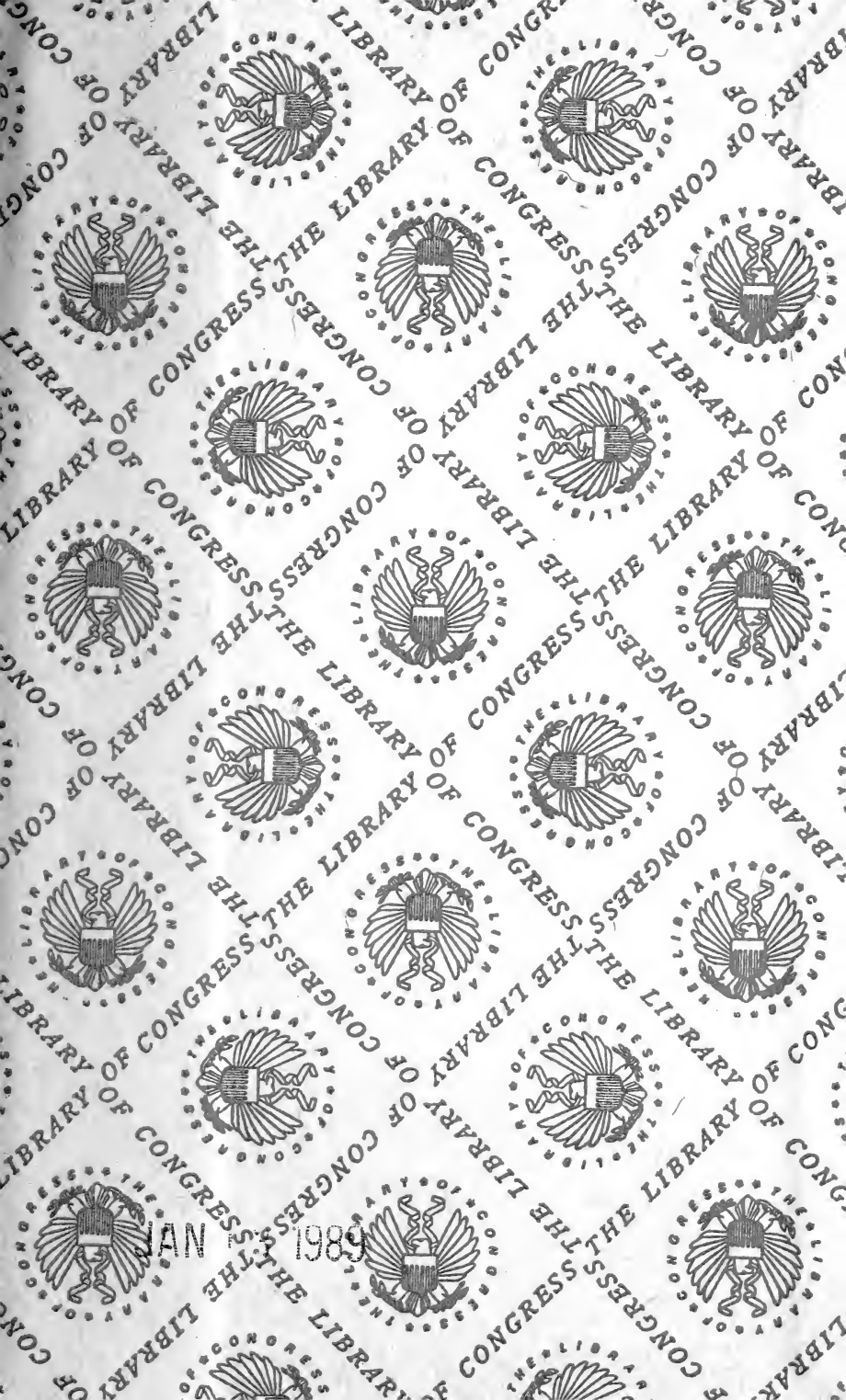


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